UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

VOLUME I

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VOLUME 1

DREAM

Dream, ruler in the shadows of the Greater SMP kingdom, is mysterious and unpredictable. He will stop at nothing to get what he wants. His unpredictable personality causes him to act in seemingly contradictory ways at times, but it is all for one greater goal: control.

"DREAM WANTS ONLY ONE THING, TO STIR THE POT AND DISRUPT THE STATUS QUO."

TECHNO

The Greater SMP, L'manberg, & other existing factions constantly find themselves at each other's (& their own) throats over control. Others, like Technoblade, want nothing but anarchy. Techno is an extremely experienced fighter with a name for violently overthrowing governments. He is by far the strongest warrior to ever descend upon the land. He also has a mysterious devotion to a "Blood God."

"TECHNO HAS NEVER STRAYED FROM THIS [ANARCHIST] IDEAL AND NEVER WILL. HE WILL MAKE/LOSE FRIENDS AROUND THIS IDEA AND WON'T CARE."

TUBBO

Being timid and more of a pacifist than those he allies himself with, Tubbo finds himself as the voice of reason more often than not. He tends to think through his circumstances more than his crass counterpart. This nature earns Tubbo more allies than enemies; the only reason he is involved in so many conflicts is due to his close friends.

"NO MATTER THE SITUATION OR HIS OWN OPINIONS ON LEADERSHIP, HE WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW THE CODES AND CONDUCTS HE BELIEVES IN: UPHOLDING THE LAWS OF HIS NATION."

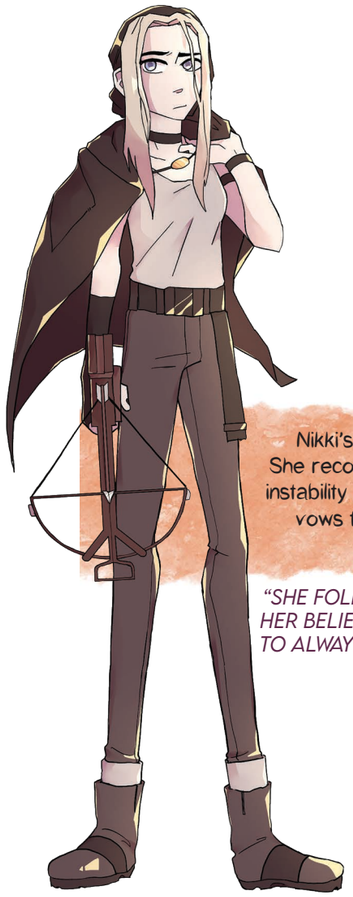
TOMMY

Almost every word in the book to describe "arrogant" can be applied to Tommy. Brash and reckless, his first solution to any problem is fighting. Behind his conceited exterior, however, is a very sentimental person with a genuine love for all those he considers friends.

"TOMMY MAY SEEM LAWFUL ON THE SURFACE (DUE TO HIS KEEN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CODES AND CONVENTIONS THAT HE MUST FOLLOW), THOUGH HE STILL FLIPS HIS VALUES RADICALLY BASED ON TINY NON-EMOTIONAL CHANGES IN HIS ENVIRONMENT."

SAPNAP

Dream has very few close friends, and Sapnap considers himself to be one of them. As the self-proclaimed long-time companion of Dream, Sapnap follows his friend's every word. He never questions orders from Dream because often they include burning and killing, both of which are things Sapnap is very passionate about.



NIKKI

Nikki's dream is to one day open a bakery and flower shop. She recognizes, however, that the Greater SMP is in a time of instability and turmoil. After joining the ranks of L'manberg, she vows to protect her home so she might one day realize her dream of roses and freshly baked pastries.

"SHE FOLLOWS HER OWN OPINIONS AND FINDS STRENGTH IN HER BELIEFS. SHE IS VERY VERBAL IN HER VALUES AND TENDS TO ALWAYS LEAN TOWARDS WHAT IS RIGHT—FRIENDSHIP AND THE BELIEF OF A FREE NATION."

PUNZ

Punz is an experienced mercenary who strictly follows the money. Although his skills with the bow could easily make him a powerful warrior who fights for a cause, he has little interest in such things. Currently, he serves the Greater SMP due to the immense fortune it provides him.

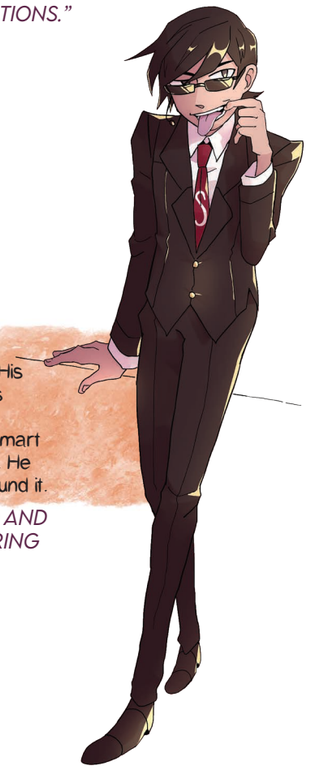
GEORGE

Being favored by Dream has its perks. Although George is a member of the Greater SMP's main army, he rarely gets involved. He is permitted to slack off and sleep on the job as much as he wants. Luckily for George, his favorite activities include slacking off and sleeping. Although Dream's behavior toward him seems relatively lighthearted, his motive is, as always, unclear.

SCHLATT

Schlatt is a new face in politics with a dangerously severe alcohol addiction to match. Although he holds strange ideals at times, people often herald him as an effective leader. He also appears to be a past acquaintance of Wilbur.

"SCHLATT FOLLOWS ONE CREED; "[IF I AM] ELECTED FAIRLY, I WILL RULE UNTIL I LOSE THE NEXT ELECTION". HE USES THIS POWER MALEVOLENTLY TO ASSERT DOMINANCE AND PUNISH REBELLIOUS FACTIONS."



QUACKITY

Although L'manberg is strict about outsiders, Quackity's connections and persuasive personality allowed him entry. His silver tongue is indicative of a career in politics. He believes he knows the best way to lead a country, and will govern according to his ideals and his alone. Although Quackity is smart and knows how to use people, his goals are relatively pure. He genuinely wants to leave the country better than how he found it.

"HE ONLY WANTS A KINDER, MORE PEACEFUL WORLD AND HE WILL FOLLOW HIS OWN PATH TO REACH IT, IGNORING POSSIBLE DISSENT FROM BIASED ANGLES."

ERET

As one of the first people to join the revolution, Eret is a close friend of Wilbur's. Eret is relatively secretive about their identity, and their comrades know very little about them.

"ERET WANTS ONLY TO SUCCEED IN HIS WORLD. HE IS SATISFIED ONLY WHEN HE IS SUCCEEDING (SOMETHING HE DOES WELL)."

PHIL

Philza, known as just "Phil", is as old as he is strong. He is known for his incredible survival instincts and is powerful enough to hold his own in battle. Phil is also the father of Wilbur. Although the father and son duo rarely see each other, Phil's lifestyle may have inspired Wilbur's rebellious tendencies.

WILBUR

Wilbur, as one might expect from the head of a new nation and revolution, is a natural leader. He is a beacon of light for those that follow him in his endeavors to rebel against the higher powers. But beyond the cool, calculated and mature exterior lie motives and beliefs much more selfish than the revolutionary lets on...

"WILBUR IS THE ARCHETYPE OF A MAN WHO [HAS] GREAT POWER AND WHO, [UPON LOSING IT] DUE TO HIS OWN POOR CHOICES AND NEGLIGENCE, SEES DESTRUCTION AS HIS RATIFICATION."

FUNDY

Fundy is the son of Wilbur and thus a contributor to his revolution. Fundy is more apathetic toward the outcome of the war due to his relationship with Wilbur. After the loss of Fundy's mother and Fundy bearing witness to Wilbur's true nature, their relationship is somewhat strained.

"FUNDY IS BOUND ONLY BY HIS OWN WANT FOR ACCEPTANCE. HE FOLLOWS NO LAWS OR STATUTES BUT STILL STRIVES FOR ONE THING: TO BE LOVED BY AN AUTHORITY."

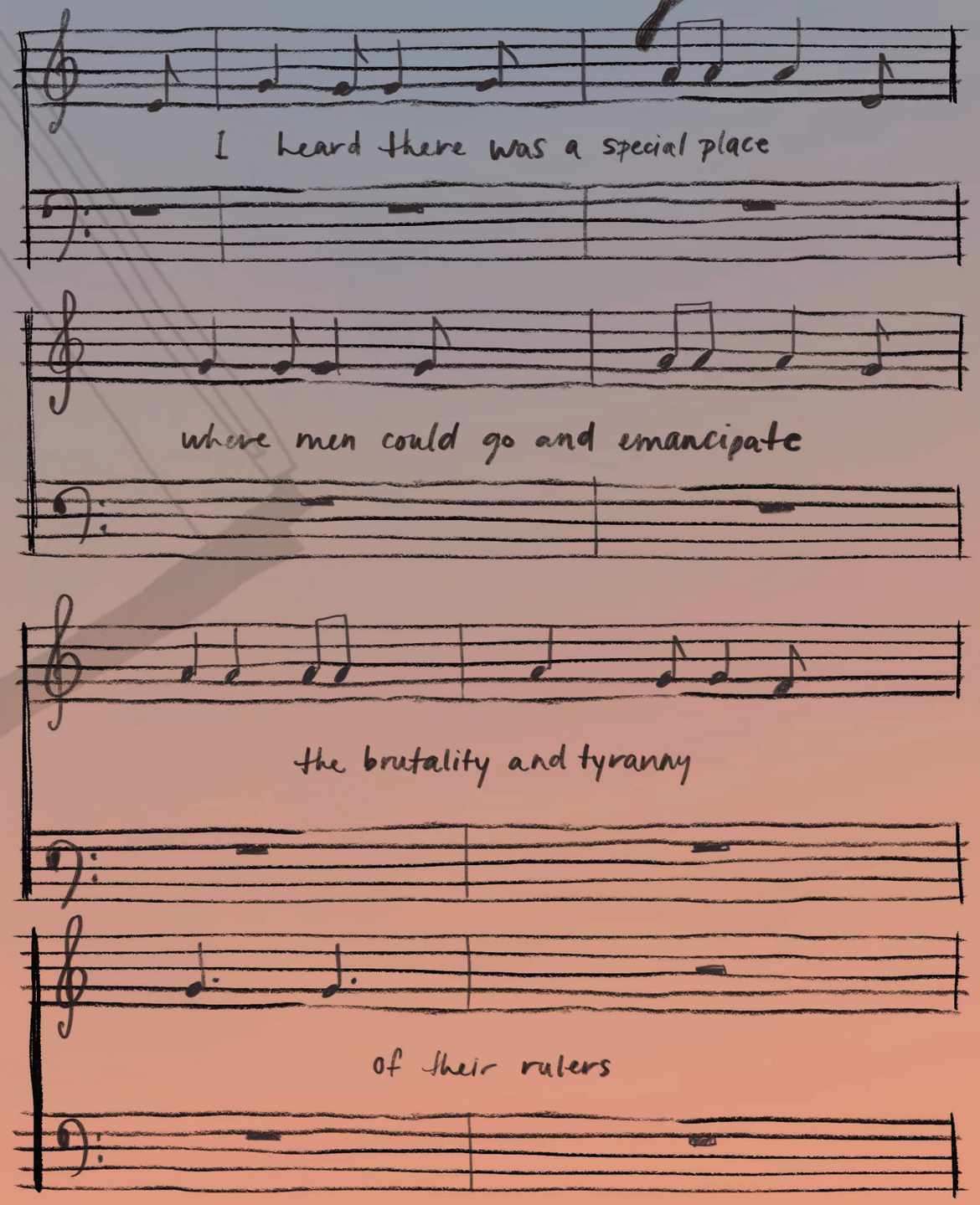
THE GREATER SMP

As the current power over the surrounding region, the Greater SMP is a kingdom consisting of most of the citizens and characters outside of L'manberg. Although a king supposedly rules over the Greater SMP, most of its militaristic actions are taken by its leader in the shadows, Dream. His four man army currently consists of himself, George, Sapnap, and the hired mercenary Punz.

L'MANBERG

L'manberg is a revolutionary group consisting of its founder and current leader, Wilbur Soot, and the soldiers who fight for the self-proclaimed country. Fundy, Eret, Tommy, and Tubbo are L'manberg's dedicated soldiers, later to be joined by others like Nikki and Jack Manifold. The country had been founded to fight against the Greater SMP's tyrannical hold of its citizens. L'manberg's core belief lies in strict, unadulterated freedom. Its ranks mainly include people who were negatively affected by Dream in some way.

Disc Saga


I heard there was a special place
where men could go and emancipate
the brutality and tyranny
of their rulers

"THAT WAS KIND OF THE GOAL...

TO CREATE [A SPACE] FOR REALLY TALENTED INDIVIDUALS..."

TO MAKE SOMETHING...

INCREDIBLE.

TUBBBBBOOOOOO!!!!

DREAM STOLE MY DISCS!!

AGAIN?? I THOUGHT YOU HID THEM?!

MOTHERFUCKER'S A PSYCHOPATH, HE DUG THEM UP!

...WHY DO THEY MATTER SO MUCH? THEY'RE JUST DISCS-

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND TUBBO!! THOSE DISCS HAVE SENTIMENTAL VALUE! THEY'RE NOT JUST ANY OLD DISCS, THEY'RE **MY** DISCS!!!

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT! JEEZ

OK, HERE'S THE PLAN... WE GO BACK TO MY BASE, GEAR UP, AND TRACK THAT GREEN BASTARD DOWN.

YEAH, AND THEN WHAT?

FIGHT HIM OBVIOUSLY! IT'S TWO VERSUS ONE, KEEP UP TUBBO!

SKID

OH SHIT.

OOF

TOMMY...
OK TUBBO... HERE'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO...
YOU JUMP AT HIM,
I'LL GET THE DISC AND MAKE A RUN FOR IT.
FUCK YOU, YOU GREEN PRICK
I'VE GOT IT!
DROP ME THE DISC!
RUN TOMMY!!
FUCK.

TUBBO, GO! FIND AN ENDERCHEST!

HEHEHHEHEHEH!

HAHAHA OOH C'MON! YOU HAVEN'T FIGURED IT OUT? IT'S A FAKE! THIS IS THE REAL MELLOHI!

THE DISCS FOR THAT NETHERITE CHEST PLATE OF YOURS. I KNOW IT'S IN YOUR BASE.

BUT HEY, THIS WAS FUN SO I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL.

FOR THE DISCS...?

DO WE HAVE A DEAL, TOMMY?

• • •

YOU GOOD?

HA! AFTER GETTING THE DISCS BACK? NEVER BEEN BETTER

YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW WE'RE GONNA CELEBRATE!

YOOO OFCOURSE I KNOW!!!

I HAVEN'T LISTENED TO THIS ONE IN AGES!

PSHHH- IT HASN'T BEEN THAT LONG SINCE OUR FIRST SCUFFLE WITH DREAM!

RIGHT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING I KNEW WE'D WIN THE DISCS BACK!

HAH YEAH!! YOU CRAFTED THAT ENDER CHEST RIGHT ON TIME TOO!

THAT'S THANKS TO YOUR ONE OBSIDIAN THOUGH!

OH! SPEAKING OF ENDER CHESTS...
I'VE ACTUALLY GOT A LIL' SURPRISE FOR YA!
WHAT IS IT?
HM, ALRIGHT...JUST
GIVE ME A SECOND
HERE YA GO! MATCHING BANDANAS!!
YOU CAN TIE IT AROUND YOUR BANDAGE TO MAKE IT HEAL FASTER! I'M SURE IT'S GOT AT LEAST A SPECK OF MY GOOD LUCK ON IT!
OH MAN, THAT'S SICK!
IN THAT CASE, I'LL WEAR IT AS LONG AS I CAN! WOULDN'T WANNA WASTE THAT LUCK OF YOURS

PFFT, RIGHT-

YOU BETTER!

TUBBO!!!

WHAM!

TOMMY?

DO YOU HAVE SAND?!

SAND? I MAY HAVE SOME STACKS. WH

AND BLACK DYE!

I DO HAVE INK SACS, WHAT DO YOU NEED IT FOR?

TUBBO, THIS IS GOING TO BE ONE OF - IF NOT - THE GREATEST POINT IN OUR LIVES.

WE'RE MAKING A COUNTRY- A COUNTRY WHERE WE CAN DO WHAT WE WANT AND LIVE OUR OWN WAYS.

TUBBO, YOU'VE GOT TO JOIN ME. IT'LL BE NOTHING WITHOUT YOU AND ME.

VIVA LA REVOLUTION.

?

VIVA... HUH?

WILBUR!!!

TOMMY, SLOW DOWN!

I GOT TUBBO AND THE MATERIALS!

HAHA

ALL RIGHT, YOU CAN SET THEM DOWN THERE.

WE CAN TAKE A BREAK WHILE WE'RE AT IT.

ALRIGHT, I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT A FEW NAMES AND...

I'M THINKING WE CALL IT... 'MANBERG' OR 'MANTOPIA'.

DOESN'T THAT SOUND A BIT TOO AMERICAN? WHAT IF WE WENT WITH...

...L'MANBERG

OH, THANK YOU!

"L'MANBERG"...

THIS IS AMAZING! AW, WILBUR YOU CAN BE THE PRESIDENT, I CAN BE YOUR RIGHT HAND MAN--

-- TUBBO YOU CAN PROBABLY HELP OUT WITH STUFF LIKE BUILDING... OH! YOU CAN BE IN CHARGE OF EXTENDING OUR SEWERS. THIS WILL BE SO COOL!

YOUR OWN COUNTRY, HM?

*@#^%()!#%

DREAM, WELCOME TO L'MANBERG.

"L'MANBERG?"

YES. WE'RE MAKING A WALL HERE TO SHOW THE BORDERS OF OUR NEW NATION

OH REALLY? WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT? WHAT LAWS DO YOU HAVE?

NO WEAPONS. NO ARMOR. NO VIOLENCE. WE SETTLE OUR DISPUTES AS CIVILIZED MEN AND SEEK TRUE FREEDOM FROM THE GREATER SMP.

YOU CAN SET UP YOUR VISA, DO WHATEVER YOU WANT OUTSIDE. WE DON'T CARE. ALL THAT MATTERS IS WHAT RESIDES IN THESE WALLS.

AND WE HAVE WOMEN!!!!!

... AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE REST OF THE GREATER SMP DECIDES TO TAKE YOUR LAND?

DREAM, I THOUGHT YOU WERE SMARTER THAN THAT.

THEY CAN'T. THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS. YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE SOMEONE ELSE'S COUNTRY.

OH, RIGHT. DREAM YOU CAN HAVE YOUR EMBASSY HERE AS WELL.

YOU CAN HAVE, LIKE, A DIRT SHACK SOME-

-WHERE...

...HE'S GONE.

...DOES THIS MEAN WE CAN'T HAVE AN EMBASSY?

OH I HOPE NOT, I ALREADY FOUND A GOOD PLACE.

NO. WE CAN HAVE OUR EMBASSY. TOMMY, I NEED A MOMENT WITH YOU IN PRIVATE, PLEASE.

HUH? OH, ALRIGHT.

WILBUR, DID YOU REALLY HAVE TO WALK US ALL THE WAY UP HERE?

LOOK AROUND, TOMMY. LOOK AROUND AT HOW LUCKY WE ARE.

DREAM DOESN'T LIKE THE NATION WE'RE BUILDING. AND WE HAVE TO BE READY FOR WHAT HE HAS PREPARED. WHEN I TOLD YOU BUILDING A COUNTRY IS NO EASY TASK, I MEANT IT.

STARTING A MOVEMENT IS EASY, TOMMY. REVOLUTION IS HARDER.

I'M READY, WILBUR! I ALREADY MADE OUR TOWER, THE EMBASSY, WE HAVE SEWAGE LINES WHERE WE CAN MANEUVER AROUND THE COUNTRY.

TOMMY...

...WE NEED TO PREPARE.

TAKE TUBBO TO THE CAMARVAN AND WAIT FOR ME. WE'RE GOING TO HOLD A MEETING.

THANK YOU FOR COMING AT SUCH A SHORT NOTICE.

AS ALL OF YOU ALREADY KNOW, WE SEEK FREEDOM WITHIN L'MANBERG.

DREAM HAS NOT BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THIS NOTION, AND FOR THAT, WE MIGHT JUST GO TO WAR.

TOMMY,

TUBBO,

FUNDY,

ERET,

I ASK - NOT ONLY AS YOUR LEADER BUT AS YOUR FRIEND -

TO JOIN ME AND FIGHT FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.

NOT ONLY IS THIS A REVOLUTION YOU WILL FIGHT WITH YOUR LIVES FOR, BUT THIS WILL BE OUR VERY OWN STEP TOWARDS LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF VICTORY.

YES SIR!!!

IT'S AN HONOR TO BE WORKING ALONGSIDE YOU, FRIENDS.

LET'S DON OUR UNIFORMS.

White Flags (and Other Signs of War)

STARLI

The view from the top of the lavacast is grimly spectacular.

Between the scorched grass, the forest burning to ash, and the dark walls of L'Manberg below, Sapnap feels like they've done a pretty good job constructing this ill omen of a war to come.

Dream, however, isn't satisfied.

The lavacast is still warm when he decides to move on.

"Let's go," he says, turning away. His netherite boots clink softly against the barren earth. He pays no heed to the figure watching them from atop the shadowed walls of L'Manberg.

Sapnap glances up at the carefully carved blackstone and concrete, and then *farther* up to the gleaming obsidian cannons and rugged cobblestone barricade looming overhead. He lingers despite his friend's eagerness to move on—enchanted by the smoke rising from the forest remains, a show of power so complete it stains the fragile mockery of a nation with ash and gunpowder and the promise of blood—until a carrot bounces off the crown of his head, making him whirl around with hackles raised.

From atop L'Manberg's walls, Eret waves another carrot and mouths, *friendship carrots!* Sapnap rolls his eyes at the unthreatening display and relaxes, dismissing the self-declared nation's only awake defender as a nonissue.

Pulling away from the freshly cooled cobblestone, Sapnap hurries after his leader with light steps and an excitement he doesn't bother to hide. Once he catches up to Dream, he bumps their shoulders together, grinning easily at Dream's exasperated huff.

"So, one last stop?" Sapnap asks, peering further along the path.

"To Tubbo's house, yeah," Dream says. "The final step of our plan. You still got some flint and steel on you?"

"Of course I do," Sapnap says, pulling it from his inventory and waving it around as proof. It's a little low on durability, but he has another to spare. "Who do you take me for?" he adds, teasing.

Dream snorts, but the corners of his mouth twitch upward. "Well," he says, an amused smile peeking through his commanding facade, "you did go a little wild on those trees—"

"You said I could!"

"—so I thought maybe you broke them all already," Dream continues, elbowing Sapnap in the side for interrupting.

Together, they walk until the wooden spruce-and-oak roof of Tubbo's house crests into view over the rolling hills. The path is more familiar than Sapnap would like; the *house* is more familiar than he'd like, eyes passing over the meticulously crafted roof he remembers repairing alongside the very same person who now leads him to burn it down all over again.

"Man," Sapnap says, mindlessly dragging his feet through the small garden out front, "we wasted so much time repairing this like a week ago."

"Yeah," Dream says, tilting his head to examine the wooden structure. He narrows his eyes with a calculating stare, as though picking out all the best places to start a fire that won't just sputter out on its own in a minute or so. Sapnap follows his gaze as Dream continues, "We spent hours on it, putting everything back exactly the way it was before Tommy burned it down… and this is how Tubbo repays us. By joining *them*."

Not expecting the bitterness cutting through Dream's tone, Sapnap looks over in surprise, but Dream's already moved on. Approaching the house, Dream drags the hooked steel over a shard of flint with a deft flick, spraying sparks against the wooden walls. Warm orange light glints off his porcelain mask, quietly impassive in the face of their hard work going up in flames.

Something about Dream's demeanor has recently curdled from light-hearted fun to serious retaliation. Sapnap gets it; the escalation from gentle teasing to genuine disagreement has unbalanced them all, and his best friend is taking the turn of atmosphere a little harder than most.

Considering the way that Bad and a couple others are starting to eye the open plains, it's easy to see why.

Sapnap scrapes flint over steel so hard it shatters in his hand. The sparks nip at his fingers, glowing against the wooden house, and Sapnap backs up in time to watch tiny embers begin to grow. He pulls out another set, and moves on to the next point.

The house catches easily. Unweathered wood groans as flames eat through the walls, clawing up to the roof. Within minutes, the oak and spruce collapses inward, releasing a billowing cloud of smoke.

Dream and Sapnap stand a short distance away, watching dark grey trails swirl into the air. Bits of ash fleck both their clothes.

"You know they're just going to take down the TNT cannons, right?" Sapnap says abruptly. "When the others wake up, they'll just tower up there and—"

"I know," Dream says. He watches a wounded iron golem clang noisily as it struggles to escape its burning abode, far too large to avoid the bursting flames. "It's fine. The cannons are a distraction, the same way the lavacast is a message. It keeps them looking up, and it makes us impossible to ignore."

"I don't think they were ignoring you before," Sapnap interjects. He *wishes* they'd ignore Dream, but he's already been branded as the tyrant of the land, as though Dream did anything but invite them in on his terms and retaliate when those lines were crossed.

Dream laughs, but it's a tighter sound than what Sapnap's used to. "Well, maybe now they'll actually listen." He gives himself a shake, as though clearing his thoughts, and then gestures for Sapnap to follow. "C'mon, we're almost done. Let's just make the official announcement and head home."

They get into position before the ruined remains of Tubbo's house. Dream cuts an intimidating figure in the firelight, all gleaming netherite backlit by flame and smoke. Sapnap claps him on the shoulder in encouragement before taking up position a half step behind, letting Dream take the lead for the speech they'd rehearsed together.

The world seems to quiet for a moment, just for them. Sapnap breathes through the sound of his heart running wild with excitement in his chest.

"Tommy," Dream announces, voice pitched to carry, "and Wilbur, and the rest of… L'Manchildburg." His face twists around the name, like it's a foul, repulsive thing.

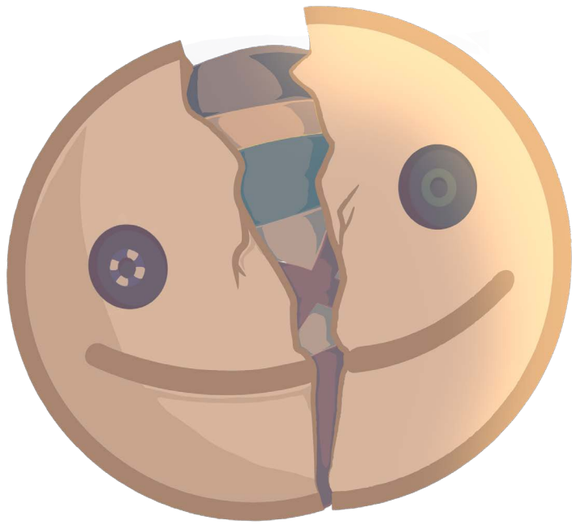
Sapnap shares that view. They both suffer that sense of intrusion, the feeling of a violated welcome, and that fault can be laid solely at the feet of L'Manberg. He remembers the lighthearted quarrel it started as—theft as always, losing brewing stands to Wilbur and Tommy's greed, a scam from the start—but it's beyond that now, and nobody's laughing the same way anymore.

His hand tightens on the hilt of his sword. *This*, he reminds himself, is what he's fighting for.

"We… are at war," Dream says. His voice crescendos with every word, fury seeping through the cracks of his calm facade. "There is no mercy. We have burnt down Tubbo's house, we have planted TNT cannons around your land, we have walled the outside with cobblestone, and we have shot one warning shot inside your walls: an explosion."

Dream moves now, animated, slamming the butt of his shield into the wilted grass with enough force that Sapnap can feel the impact through the soles of his feet. There's danger in his movement and fervor in his voice, and Sapnap watches that bitterness from before sink into his best friend's bones and lock in, poisoning his tone into something vicious. Venomous.

"And we have *no mercy*!" Dream shouts. "*No mercy* for you! Do you understand? We will come, we will burn down your houses, we will kill everything inside your walls, and we will take back the land that is rightfully ours if you do not surrender." He swings out his sword, pointing at the offending walls of L'Manberg in the distance. "I want to see *white flags*! White flags, outside your base, *by* tomorrow, *at* dawn—or you are *dead*!"



War for Independence

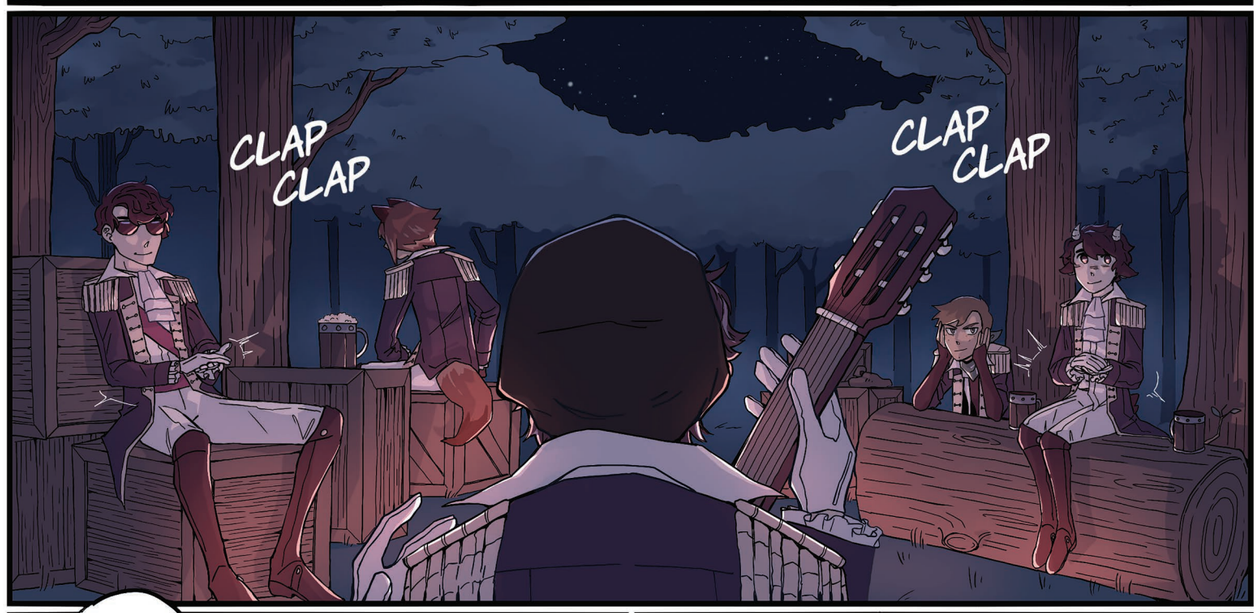
well, this place is real, you needn't fret

with Wilbur, Tommy, Tubbo, ~~Eunday, Eret~~ FUCK ERET!!

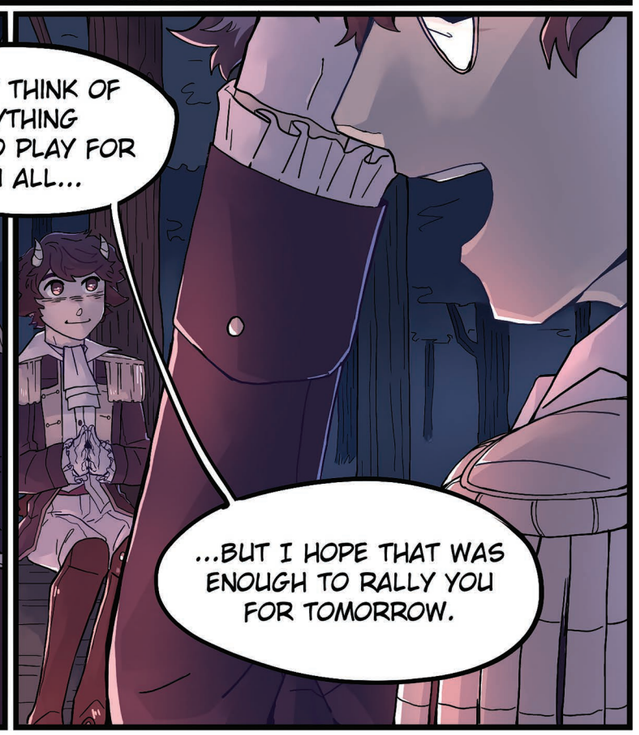
it's a very big and NOT BLOWN UP

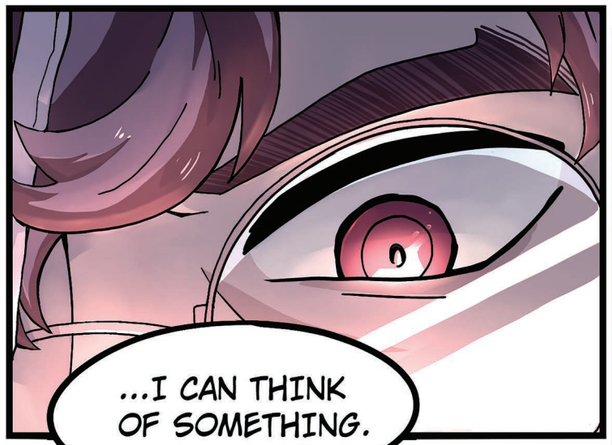
l'manberg

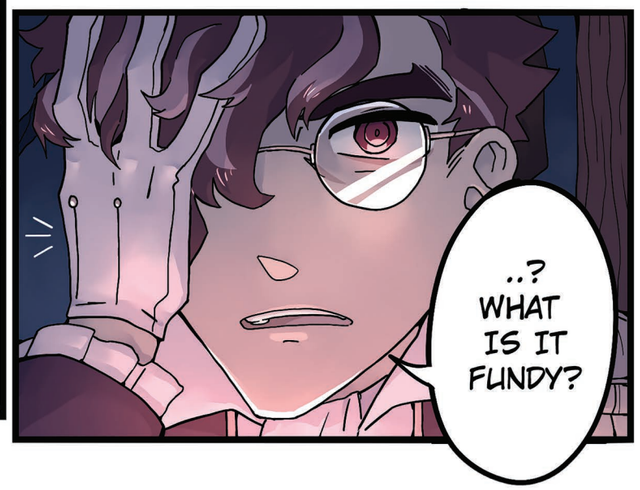
WOO!

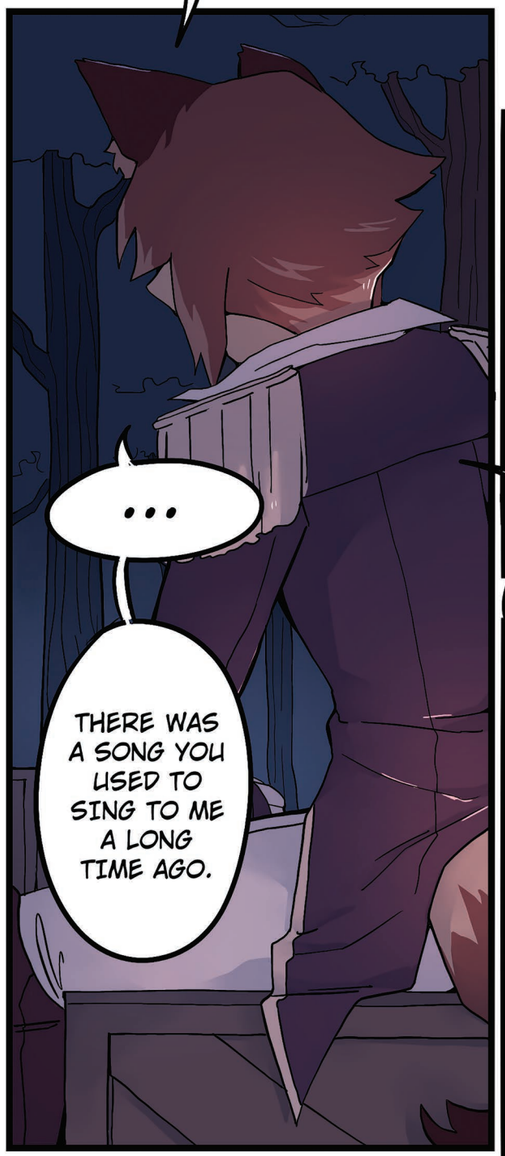

CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP

THANK YOU.


I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO PLAY FOR YOU ALL...
...BUT I HOPE THAT WAS ENOUGH TO RALLY YOU FOR TOMORROW.


...I CAN THINK OF SOMETHING.


..? WHAT IS IT FUNDY?

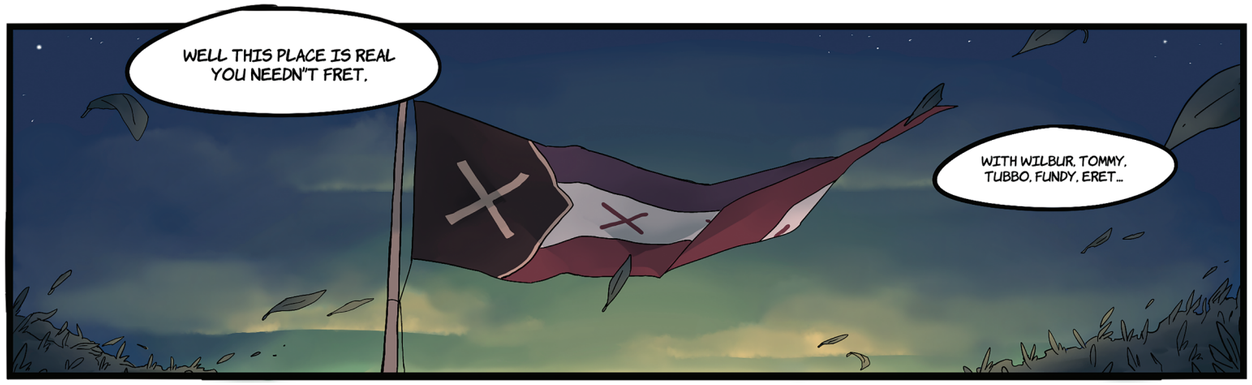

...
THERE WAS A SONG YOU USED TO SING TO ME A LONG TIME AGO.

YOU'VE NEVER DONE AN ACCOMPANIMENT FOR IT WITH THE GUITAR, THOUGH.

YOU CAN SING AND PLAY AT THE SAME TIME?
THAT'S SO COOL!
WILBUR IS A PERSON OF MANY TALENTS.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED BY HOW MUCH THE OLD MAN GETS UP TO.
HAH!
LIKE SPEARHEADING A REVOLUTION?
I'M REALLY NOT THAT OLD, ERET...
SIGH...

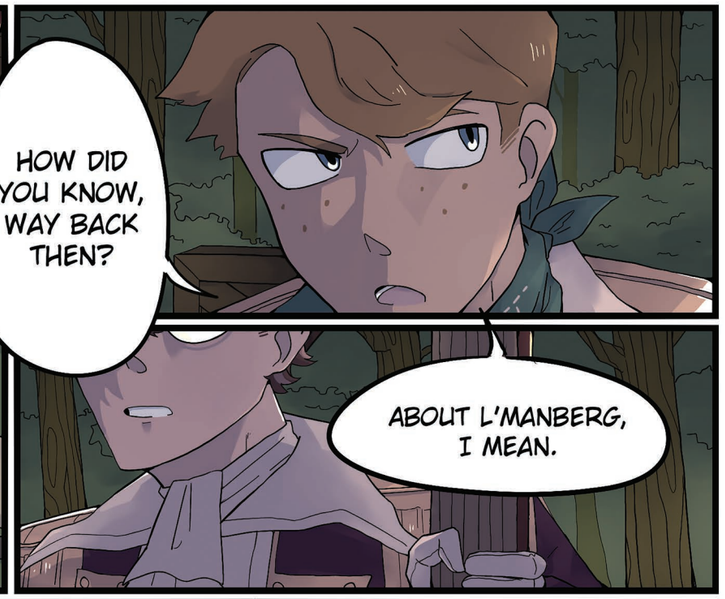
...OKAY.
I'LL PLAY THIS LAST SONG AND THEN IT'S TIME.
...I HEARD THERE WAS A SPECIAL PLACE ♩
♫

WHERE MEN COULD GO AND EMANCIPATE...
THE BRUTALITY AND TYRANNY OF THEIR RULERS...

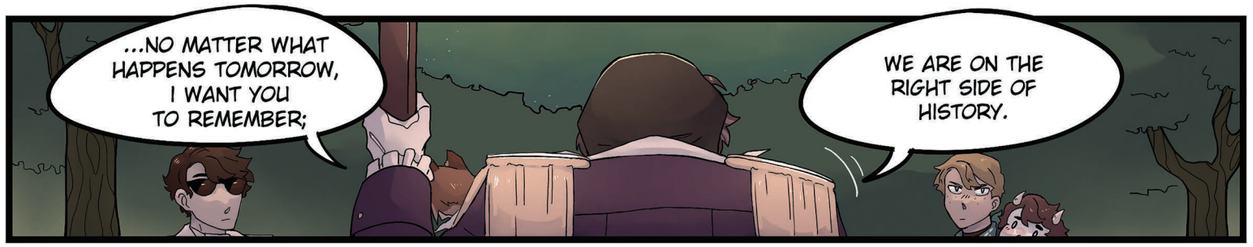

WELL THIS PLACE IS REAL YOU NEEDN'T FRET.
WITH WILBUR, TOMMY, TUBBO, FUNDY, ERET...

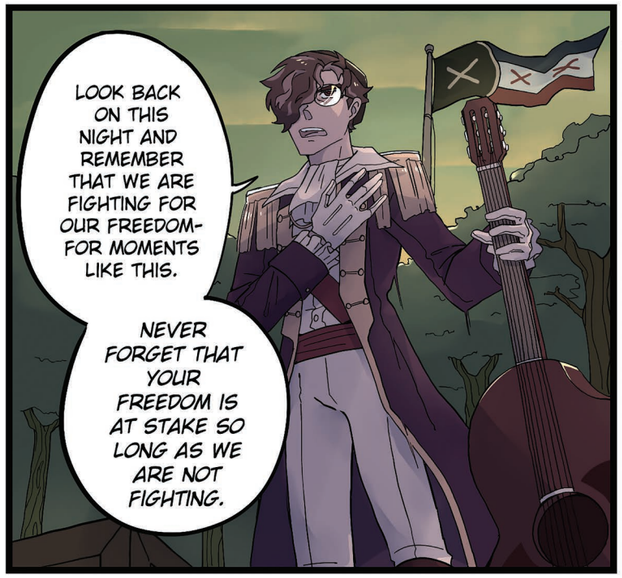
...
DO YOU SEE NOW?

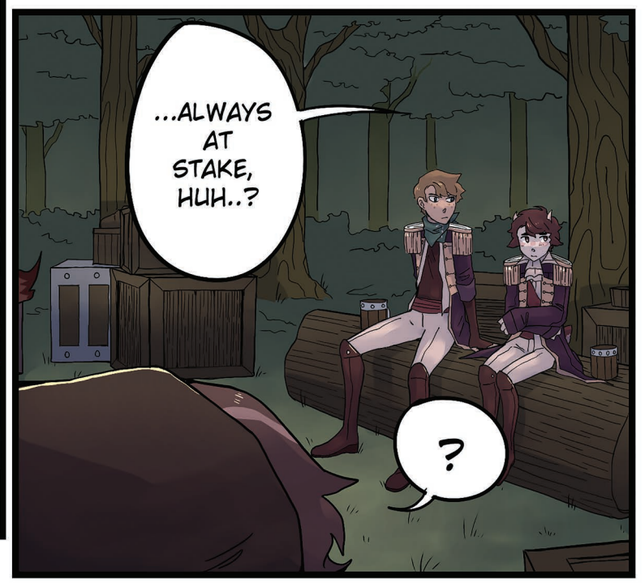
WE HAVE A LOT TO LIVE UP TO.


HOW DID YOU KNOW, WAY BACK THEN?
ABOUT L'MANBERG, I MEAN.

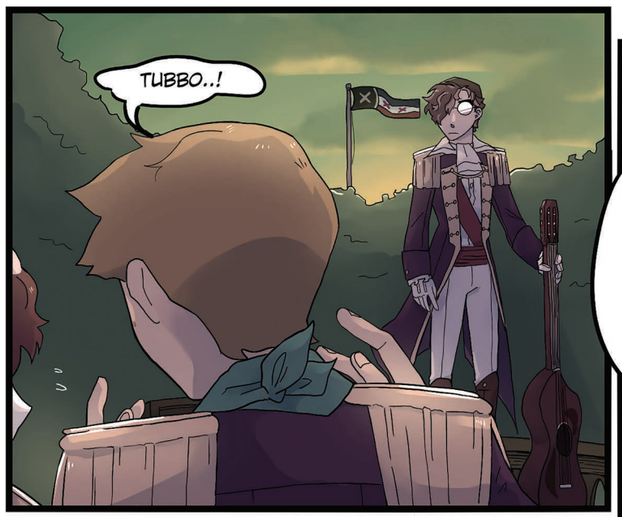
PFFT-!
WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING AT ME?
...HAHAHAH!
I DIDN'T KNOW! IT'S JUST A SONG MY OWN FATHER SANG TO ME, A LONG TIME AGO.
WELL, I ADJUSTED A FEW LYRICS FOR YOU, BUT... THE MEANING STILL RINGS TRUE.
FATHER, HUH..?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE SEEN HIM...
I WONDER, IF HE SAW ME NOW...
WOULD HE BE..?

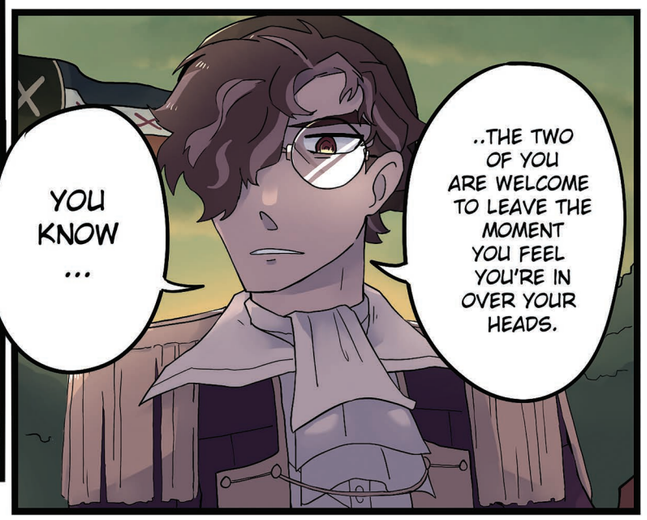

...NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TOMORROW, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER;
WE ARE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY.


LOOK BACK ON THIS NIGHT AND REMEMBER THAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR OUR FREEDOM- FOR MOMENTS LIKE THIS.
NEVER FORGET THAT YOUR FREEDOM IS AT STAKE SO LONG AS WE ARE NOT FIGHTING.

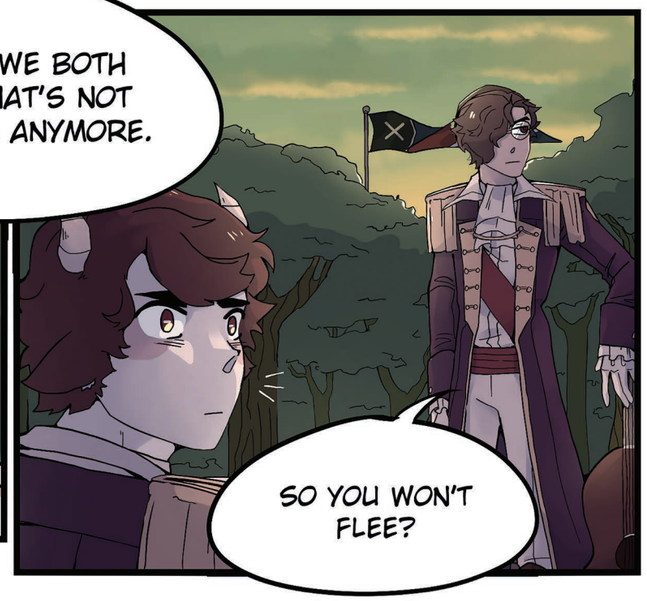

...ALWAYS AT STAKE, HUH..?
?

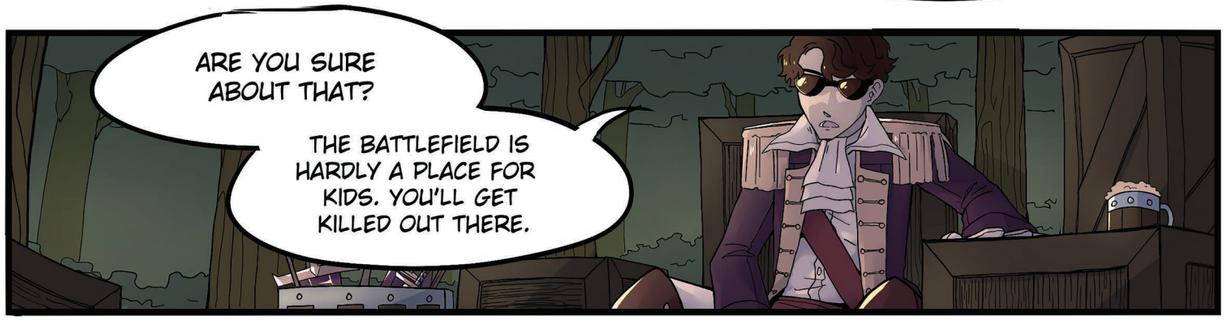
AN ETERNITY SPENT FIGHTING... THAT DOESN'T REALLY SOUND LIKE FREEDOM.
?!


TUBBO..!

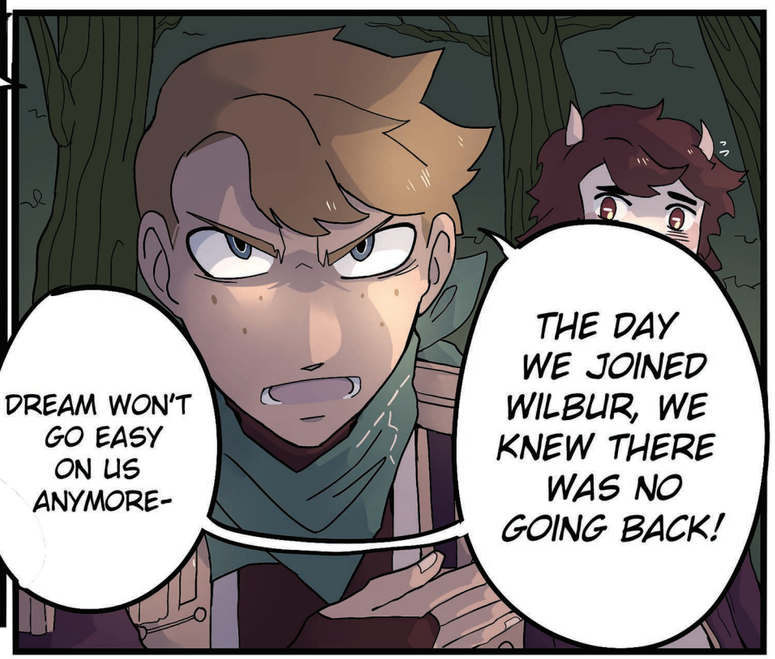

YOU KNOW ...
..THE TWO OF YOU ARE WELCOME TO LEAVE THE MOMENT YOU FEEL YOU'RE IN OVER YOUR HEADS.

I THINK WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S NOT AN OPTION ANYMORE.


SO YOU WON'T FLEE?

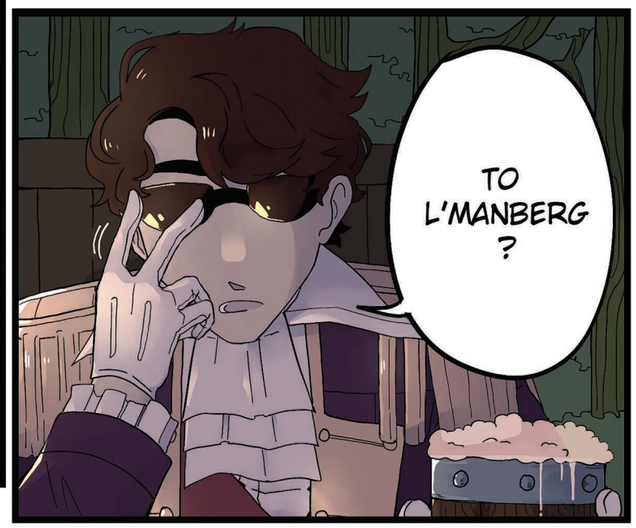

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
THE BATTLEFIELD IS HARDLY A PLACE FOR KIDS. YOU'LL GET KILLED OUT THERE.

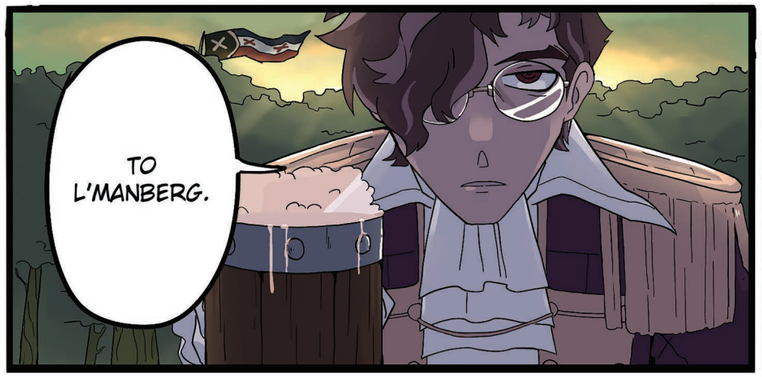
YES!!
WE SWORE WE'D FIGHT WITH OUR LIVES FOR THIS COUNTRY!

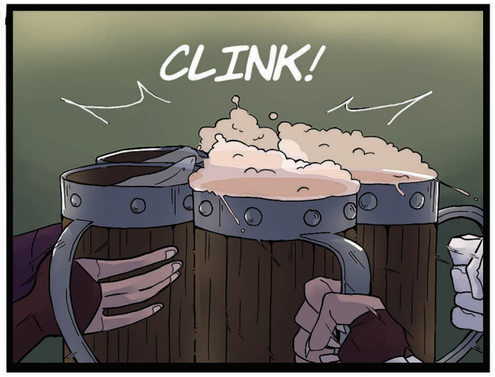

DREAM WON'T GO EASY ON US ANYMORE-
THE DAY WE JOINED WILBUR, WE KNEW THERE WAS NO GOING BACK!

...
I SEE...

WELL, L'MANBERG CAN'T LIBERATE ITSELF.


TO L'MANBERG ?


TO L'MANBERG.


CLINK!

IRONIC... YOU'VE CONSTRICTED YOURSELF, WILBUR.

WOSH

TWAK

THE WALL YOU BUILT TO KEEP YOURSELF ISOLATED FROM THE WORLD... IS A PEN.

YOU'RE CORNERED, SOOT! FOLLOW OUR DEMANDS AND NONE OF YOU HAVE TO DIE!

...AND WHAT MIGHT THOSE DEMANDS BE?

IN BATTLE, YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER.

...YOU MUST ALLOW US TO DETONATE ONE EXPLOSIVE WITHIN YOUR WALLS. THAT'S ALL.

WHAT..? NOT SURRENDER? THAT'S A SURPRISINGLY BENIGN ULTIMATUM... BUT IT'S BETTER THAN GIVING UP

WHAT'S HIS AIM?

YOU CAN BLOW UP ONE PIECE OF TNT. IT MEANS NOTHING TO ME.

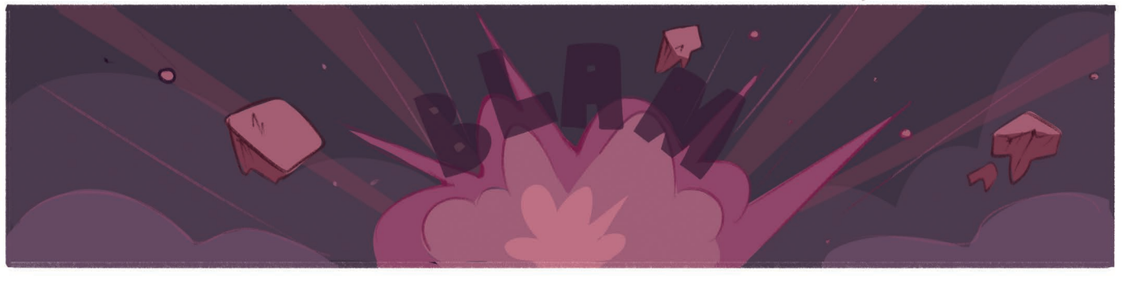
PULL

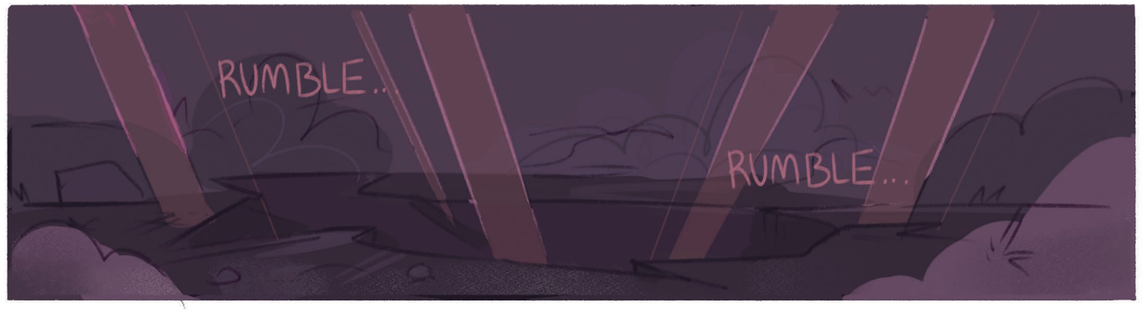
SNAP

FFFFFFF

GET BACK, GET BACK! DONT LET THIS PIECE OF TNT HURT YOU.

HISS...


BLAM


RUMBLE...
RUMBLE...

BOOM
WHA- HOW?!

BOOM
IS EVERYONE OKAY?!
RUN!!
AS FAR AS YOU CAN!
RETREAT!!!
...
GENTLEMEN!!!
WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE, FOLLOW ME
A TUNNEL?!
RUNNING
WAIT WAIT WAIT, ERET WHAT IS THIS???
WHOAAAA
A SECRET WEAPON.
WHAT???
I HAVE PREPARED ALL THE MATERIAL WE NEED,
NOW BE QUIET, WE DON'T WANT THE ENEMY TO KNOW THIS LOCATION.

WELCOME,
TO THE FINAL CONTROL ROOM !

WHAT??

OH MY GOD??
WHAT??

WOOOW!!

WHAT DOES THIS BUTTON DO?-

smirk
...

CLICK!

THERE'S NOTHING IN THE CHESTS-

-SHUTS-

WHAT??

DOWN WITH THE REVOLUTION, BOYS !

A P P E A R S

TRAITOR-

IT WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE.

...ACK, MY HEAD HURTS.

!!

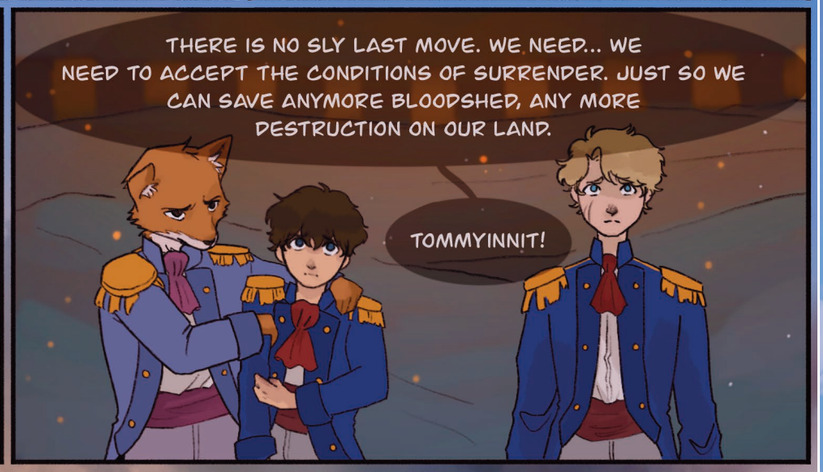
THE BUTTON!!

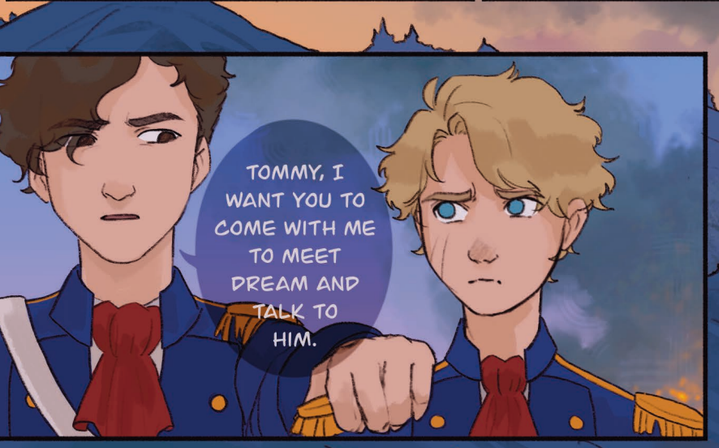
...SO, ERET BETRAYED US. ALL OF MY ITEMS, LMANBERG... THEY'RE ALL GONE.

BA NG!

ERET, YOU BASTARD...

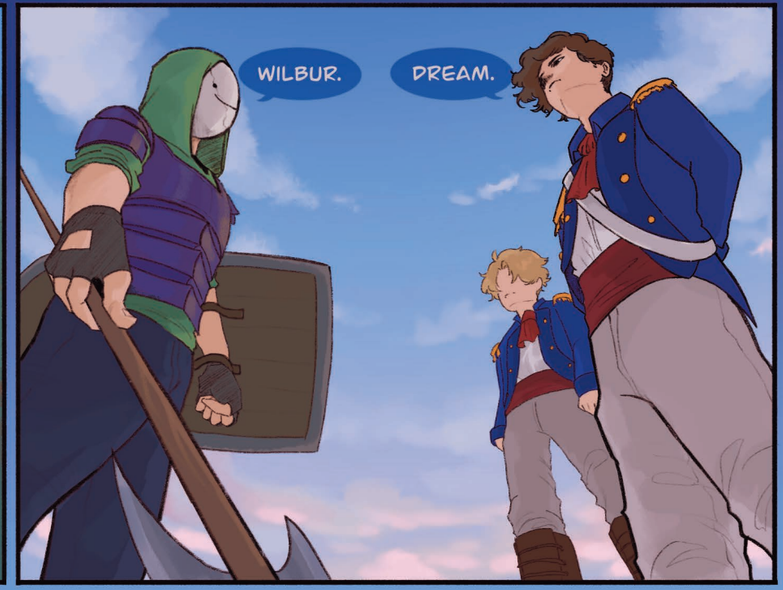
YOU FUCKED UP.

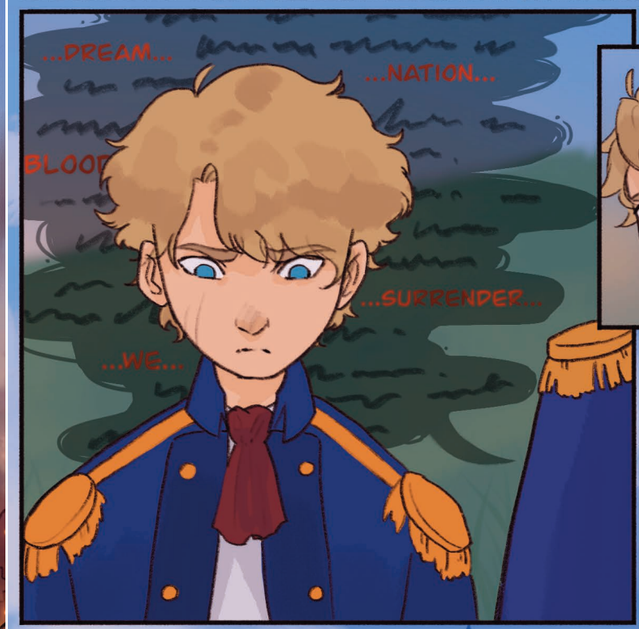




I WANT YOU TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T RUN YOUR MOUTH. NO CHALLENGING DREAM ON HIS HONOUR, NO... NONE OF THAT.

YOU DID WELL TOMMY, YOU WERE A GOOD RIGHT HAND MAN. IT'S JUST A SHAME IT HAS TO END LIKE THIS.





HALF A HEART, BOW DUEL! ME VERSUS YOU, A ONE V. ONE FOR L'MANBERG!

TOMMY, CALM! YOUR PASSION WILL GET YOU NO WHERE!

C'MON DREAM, LET'S ONE V. ONE! YOU'VE BLOWN UP ALL OUR SHIT, WHAT'VE WE GOT TO LOSE?! ONE VERSUS ONE, IN FRONT OF EVERYONE!

TOMMY!

WHAT WAS THE ONE THING I ASKED, TOMMY?

WE NEED YOU ALIVE. YOUR LIFE IS WORTH MORE THAN THE REVOLUTION.

WILBUR, LOOK AROUND US! I'M DOING THIS, ALRIGHT? FOR INDEPENDENCE.

...THIS MAN DOES NOT SPEAK FOR ME DREAM.

BUT IF THIS IS SOMETHING YOU'RE WILLING TO DO AND TOMMY'S WILLING TO DO... I WILL- I WILL LET IT HAPPEN.

A DUEL FOR L'MANBERG? . ..HM.

OK. HERE ARE THE TERMS: IF YOU WIN, THEN... YOU CAN HAVE INDEPENDENCE.

IF YOU LOSE... YOU **DON'T** GET INDEPENDENCE **AND** I GET MELLOHI.

THE DISCS...?

DEAL.

OK.

SHIIING

SFX: GLEAM GLEAM

IT'S SUNDOWN.

TEN PACES, NO ARMOR, DREAM.

I'LL COUNT THE PACES. FACE TO FACE.

...HEY TOMMY... LISTEN, I'M NOT FULLY SUPPORTING YOUR DECISIONS HERE BUT...

GOOD LUCK.

WILBUR... WHAT IF I MISS?

TOMMY, THIS WAS *YOUR* CONDITION. I TOLD YOU, YOUR PASSION, THE FIRE IN YOUR HEART IS BRILLIANT FOR WAR! BUT IT IS NOT GOOD IN THESE SITUATIONS.

YOU'VE REALLY GOT YOURSELF IN A MESS.

...DO I SHOOT HIM, WIL OR DO I AIM FOR THE SKIES?

TOMMY, I WANT YOU TO DO WHATEVER YOUR HEART SAYS YOU SHOULD DO

TO CLARIFY THE TERMS: BACKS TO EACH OTHER. I WILL COUNT TEN PACES.

YOU WILL HOLD UNTIL I HAVE SAID THE WORD "FIRE," AFTER WHICH YOU MAY FIRE UPON EACH OTHER.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 PACES

FIRE!

TommyInnit was shot by Dream

IS HE OKAY?
PLEASE BE OKAY
WAKE UP PLEASE
GASP
ARE YOU OKAY?
TOMMY?
WHERE IS HE?
TOMMY-
WHERE IS THIS GREEN BASTARD
STANDS
WILBUR:
TOMMY WHERE ARE YOU GOING?! YOU'RE INJURED WE NEED TO GO BACK!
GO BACK TO L'MANBURG... I'LL MEET YOU THERE
NOW TOMMY IM EXPECTING MELLOHI TO BE GIVEN.
AND WE WILL SEIZE AND REVOKE L'MANB-
NO DREAM.
ILL DO THIS JUST FOR LMANBERG. I'LL GIVE YOU BOTH OF THE DISCS...
IF YOU LET US... HAVE OUR INDEPENDENCE.
THAT IS AN INTERESTING DEAL. VERY SELFLESS OF YOU.

FOR L'MANBURG.
FOR WILBUR.
FOR TUBBO

TOMMY...?
TOMMY WHATS
HAPPENING?

I'LL GRANT YOU
TECHNICAL
INDEPENDENCE,
FOR BOTH DISCS.

WILBUR...WILBUR I SECURED OUR INDEPENDENCE.

WHAT...WHAT DID YOU DO?"

I- I GAVE HIM THE DISCS WILL.

MY RIGHT HAND MAN
TOMMYINNIT GET
OVER HERE!

the flags rise at dawn

YUUDOUFU

Freedom exists in the souls of those who fight for it and this Wilbur knows all too well. He holds the white quill between his fingers and it feels of liberty and independence and everything they've sacrificed soul and wit for. And here it sits—L'Manberg's Declaration of Independence—waiting idly in his hands to be written in.

Wilbur licks his lips, feeling the tangible early morning air grace his wetted mouth, and drags his fingers across its bound leather back. It's rough against his hands, hands which have grown calloused over time through the cruelty of black soot slathered across his youthful skin and by the intensity of Wilbur's grip on his sword in the face of war. It is with these dirtied, scathed palms that the newly appointed president opens the book with a hesitancy to his gesture before he begins with a simple phrase, one that has been embedded in his mind from the day he laid eyes upon this land, this nation he was to claim: "We gaze upon the swaths of redwood trees, the great hills to our south, and the walls that have protected us for years. I, as the now President of L'Manberg hereby state:—"

And he pauses, for there would be no meaning if he continues to phrase this declaration as one of eloquent speech. For brevity is the soul of wit, people say, so Wilbur does just that. He presses the tip of the fine quill to the parchment, black bleeding into yellowed paper, and he writes in big, scratchy capital letters: SUCK IT, GREEN BOYYYYYYY.

Then their signatures, all four of them, are signed onto the declaration, and the contract is sealed forever in darkened letters. It becomes their trophy, their memoir for all their endeavors and hardships, and thus they frame it in the caravan.

Now, Wilbur is, and has been, for as long as he's known, a great man who writes and makes his worth in written compositions. He is, or as the people say, a silver-tongued bard, blessed by the heavens with a gift of being able to weave out phrases of such that renders others speechless. However, at this moment, the skies have taken his tongue for their own, and the words in Wilbur's throat vaporize into mist. This time, he is the one who is left speechless, unable to utter a single syllable of how he feels.

There is more than just pride brewing in the depths of his chest. Oh, no, no, no. There is much more than just the feeling of elation. Tangled with that delight and ecstasy

is something more sinister, something that even Wilbur himself cannot lay a finger on. And it is eating at him, because this period before dawn is one to be celebrated, not one for him to harbor unreconciled emotions. Amidst the haze of his thoughts, Wilbur can hear the exuberant shouts coming from Tommy, Tubbo, and Fundy and abruptly he's jolted from his mind as one of them grabs at his torn sleeve, pulling him along. Within a heartbeat, cold air slams into his face and into his dry eyes and heated cheeks, and Wilbur, for the first time since the start of all the conflict, *inhales*.

As the crisp night air cradles the edges of his face in its hands, he allows himself to *breathe*. Wilbur takes in the sharp tangy flavor of the encompassing skies that wrap over his country and lay upon shadows against the caravan. He allows himself to think then, that this is sufficient. That none of those irrelevant feelings swarming haphazardly within him mattered. This land before him is what he wanted, is what really *mattered*. It may not yet be on par with what he desires for, but it is enough. What he has acquired through sweat and tears and blood is now his, and that is enough.

Wilbur Soot, the boy who had once dreamed of a land of freedom that would prosper under the valiant rays of a rising sun, is no longer a child but a warrior, a leader, a *president* of the world he'd finally managed to mold between his palms. He is here, witnessing the rolling hills in the far distance, able to touch the water that runs through his nation like veins of blood, and for this he is satisfied.

He is satisfied, yes, and he *should* be satisfied, but even with this sense of contentment running through his blood like pure adrenaline, Wilbur cannot stand still. His nerves are jittery, he rocks on the heels of his feet, and the wind begins to feel like a hindrance. There is a feeling at the tips of his fingers, just barely, *barely*, there, and yet there is something undoubtedly *off*. It feels to Wilbur the same as if there is a bright red smudge hidden in the corner of a painter's canvas—subtle, but vibrant enough for the naked eye to catch.

And just like that, the feeling of a bright red smear materializes on the riverbank across the jagged streams of water. It morphs into four other figures, wrapped in the silhouette of night, but the outline of their glowing armor is apparent enough for Wilbur to properly catch onto their identities.

"Would you excuse me while I'll go talk with Dream and his gentlemen?" Wilbur asks aloofly in spite of himself. He matches his words with a small smile and hopes that none of his officers have caught on to his shift in demeanor. "I'll be back in a few."

"Go ahead," Tubbo responds almost immediately with a gentleness that has stayed with him through the brutality of war. It eases Wilbur's heart somewhat, though there is still an ache that pulses against his bruised rib cage. "Be sure to stay safe."

The lightheartedness of Tubbo's words makes Wilbur falter, makes the hands at his side twitch almost into fists, but he sucks in a sharp breath and gives his secretary of state a firm nod. He watches with bleary eyes as Tommy bounds off to gather with Tubbo and Fundy, and his chest *squeezes*. That innocence in Tubbo's voice, even when he's bore through the fire that had attempted to raze their nation to the ground, is something that makes Wilbur unadulteratedly *guilty*.

Tubbo, Tommy, and Fundy had not lived past fifteen years before they were to face the horrors of battle, thrown into the ultimate game of chess and forced to grow into an adult. They had not the luxury of spending the rest of their childhood in blissful ignorance as Wilbur had, and with that in mind is what makes his throat constrict hideously.

"Wilbur Soot."

Wilbur opens his eyes, startled. His internal conflicts flee from his mind like rabbits from an enclosure, and he finds himself eye to eye with none other than—

"Dream," Wilbur sighs out, offering the man a sleazy grin. He gives the other a mock bow. "How have you been, might I dare ask?"

Dream, under his cracked mask, still oozes the superiority of a tyrant, a dictator, a *god*, and yet there is still something more docile to the way he swings his arm to the back of his neck and lets out a sheepish laugh. His shoulders are lax and his axe is sheathed, but Wilbur cannot bring himself to be comfortable in the presence of this omnipotent being.

The war may be over, Wilbur thinks as Dream looks down upon him, but he should continue to tread lightly upon the rocks that Dream has placed in his path. After all, their relationship is as volatile as the precariousness of a perfunctory house of cards. One small flick of a finger and…

"It's been an absolute pleasure clashing with you," Wilbur chooses to say, offering a hand to brace said tower of cards. The words taste like bitter rocks in his mouth, and all the letters he enunciates is as if he is chewing on sand. "Since you've declared yourself as the ruler of your land, Dream, what shall I refer to you as? If I request you to address me as President Soot, what will I have the pleasure of calling you from now on? King? Lord, perhaps? Or a title of another caliber?"

Dream tilts his head in a way that has his ender-green eyes reflecting dangerously in the dying moonlight. He takes a good look at Wilbur's outstretched hand before ignoring it and shifting his posture.

"Oh, you know," Dream bites out with a hint of what Wilbur takes as smugness. "You can refer to Eret as King Eret."

Wilbur goes rigid, the temperature around him dropping several degrees. He turns his head to the man at Dream's side, the one with shades glinting white and a cape clasped over his shoulders and a neat, golden crown donned upon his head, and, oh, *oh*. There he is. The supposed ally who betrayed Wilbur and the others, who caught them in an explosion that took their supplies and scarred them for life, who uttered the fated words.

King Eret of the Greater SMP.

He does, in the slightest, carry himself as one would vision a king: head held high, chin up, dressed in the cleanest of clothes, boots shined, and all grime scrubbed off his skin. It's as if he had never participated in the war at all. And compared to Wilbur… well, Wilbur is really nothing compared to how Eret presents himself.

Wilbur's outfit is ragged, ashes smeared on his face, dark bags under his eyes, hair tousled, blood and dirt clogged under his chipped nails. His lips are chapped, his feet have blisters, and there is a visible hole at the side of his left shoe. If he hadn't been in the presence of the almighty Dream himself, Wilbur may have just laughed at how pitiful he himself looks.

"It was part of the contract," Eret muses in that deep voice of his with a hand humbly placed across his heart.

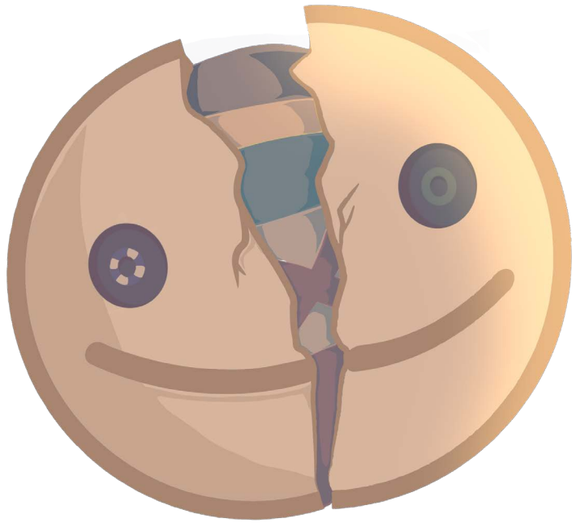
No, Wilbur doesn't think he can take this anymore without vomiting a little in his mouth. "Well, isn't that so?" He swallows the bile, tearing his eyes away from the traitor and turning his attention to Dream again. "Well, I've had a really good time, thank you. Our paths will cross someday, but for now, farewell. Goodbye. I'm sure our next meeting will be just as pleasant as this."

The president leaves without another look at his opponents (and certainly not at god forsaken *Eret*), returning to the caravan lit ablaze against the brightening skies. The fire crackles above, throwing small waves of gold and red onto Fundy and the others, who once catch sight of Wilbur meandering along the riverbank bordering L'Manberg, practically throw themselves onto him. He laughs along while their arms sling across his back and they bombard him with questions about his meeting with Dream.

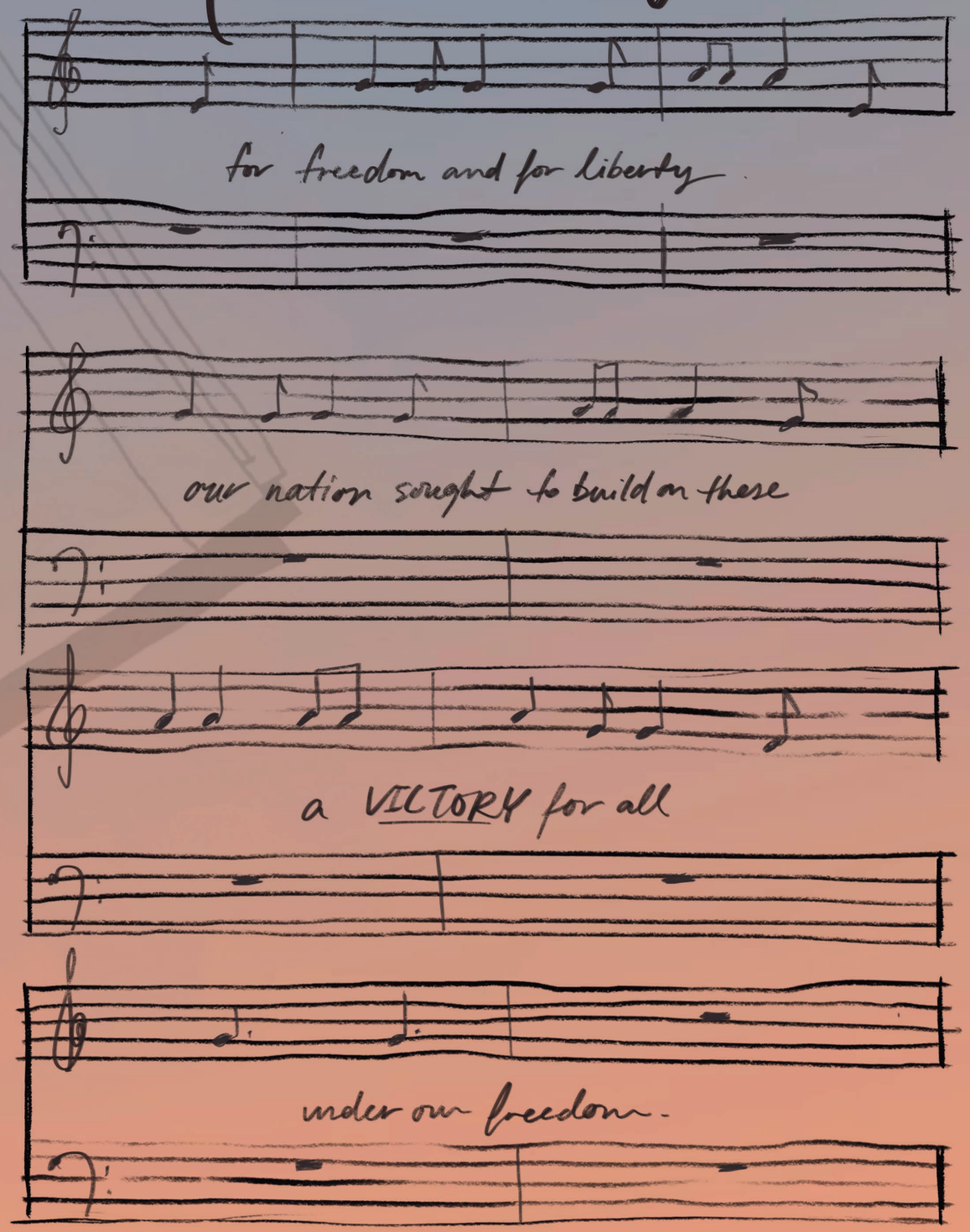
"It was only a brief encounter," Wilbur notes. He puts a finger up, stopping the rest of the boys from speaking before he can finish. "But Eret is now king, apparently."

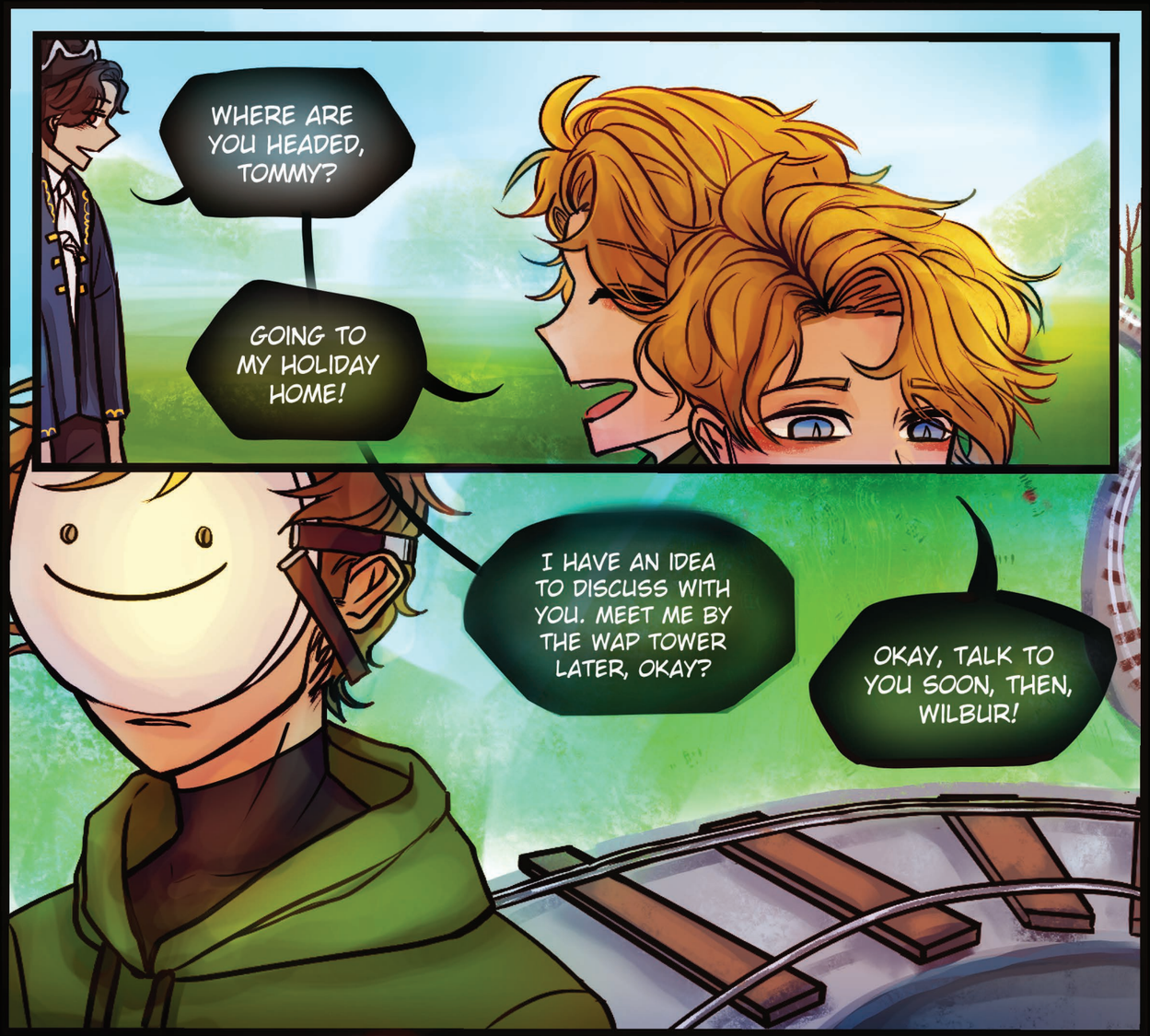
There is a pause, though it may have just as well been close to none when not even a breath's width later, Tommy starts screaming at the top of his lungs, Tubbo erupts into shouts of disdain, and Fundy buries his head in his hands, and all Wilbur can do is chortle at the sight of their realization of the inconceivable.

In the far distance, when the breeze rustles through the branches of trees and as the first leaf falls onto the dew-soaked grass hills, Wilbur can hear a symphony. Its cadence follows the night as it lifts from the far mountains' shoulders, and when the black recedes from the incoming mellow orange, the flags rise at dawn, bringing forth a new era of L'Manberg.



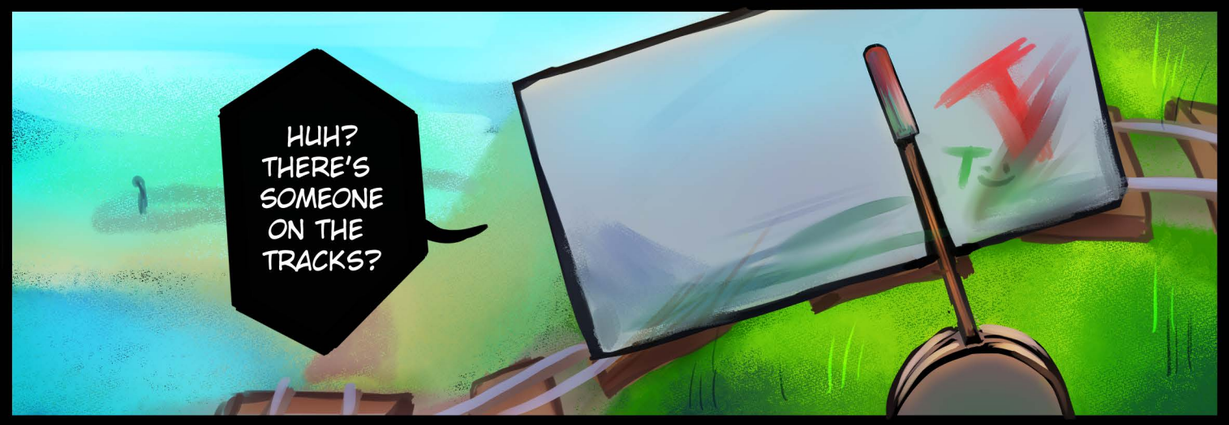
After the War

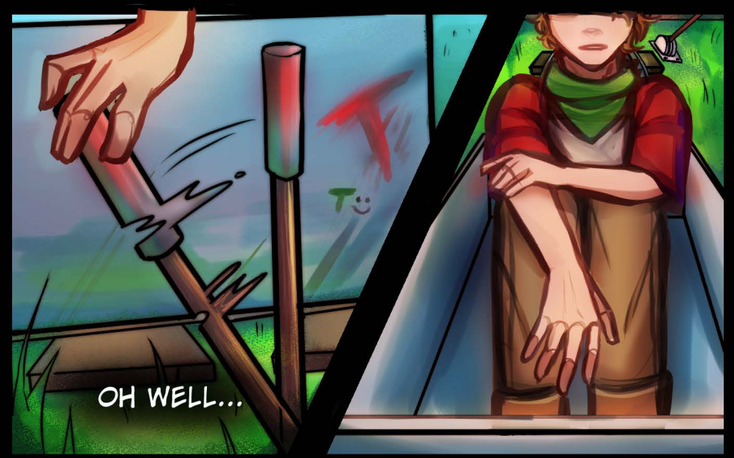



WHERE ARE YOU HEADED, TOMMY?
GOING TO MY HOLIDAY HOME!
I HAVE AN IDEA TO DISCUSS WITH YOU. MEET ME BY THE WAP TOWER LATER, OKAY?
OKAY, TALK TO YOU SOON, THEN, WILBUR!

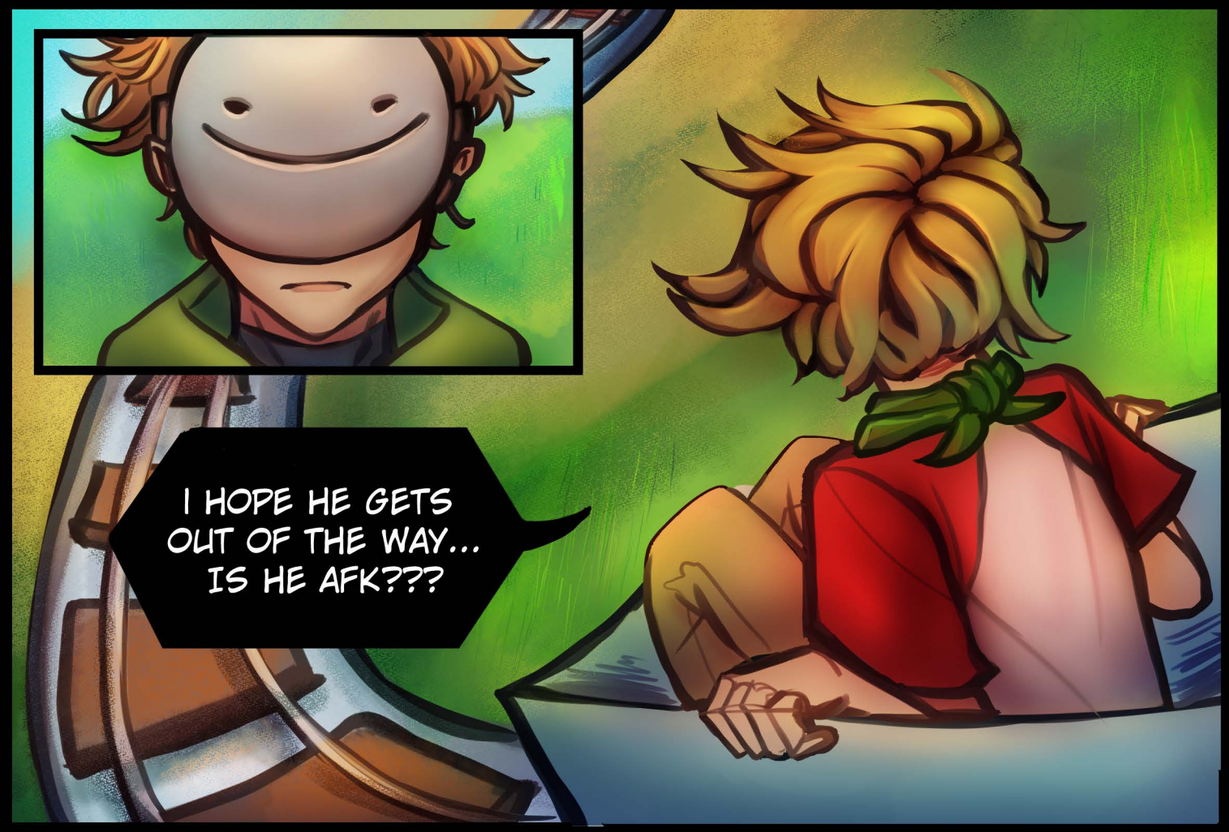
I REALLY NEED MY DISCS BACK

I'LL THINK OF A PLAN LATER


HUH? THERE'S SOMEONE ON THE TRACKS?


OH WELL...

IS THAT DREAM?


I HOPE HE GETS OUT OF THE WAY... IS HE AFK???

DREAM?
DREAM?
DREAM!
OH MY GOD DID I JUST KILL DREAM?
ALL OF DREAM'S STUFF!
AND...
MELLOHI?
I HAVE TO SHOW EVERYONE!
WILBURRR!

Hornets on the Walls

THCSCUS

Here is what Quackity knows: he's the new kid on the block, and that makes him weak.

He could tell everybody else knows it, too, their eyes like vultures waiting for him to drop, to mess up, before they fall from the sky to devour him whole. He does not fault them for it. It's only natural to have a pecking order, and just an unfortunate consequence that Quackity is at the bottom. He's the new kid, after all, with no allies and no loyalties.

"... I love being better than everyone," is the first thing he hears when he arrives for the day.

He knows the voice, knows the face attached to it. TommyInnit. He must have been new, once, but now he walks the Prime Path with confidence that he belongs on it. The wooden planks know him by his footsteps, well worn into their surface.

"Hello, Big Q," Tommy says, interrupted from whatever conversation they were having before Quackity's interruption.

"Hey, Big Q," Wilbur echoes.

"Fellas." Quackity rolls his shoulders and puts on a grin that feels too crowded with teeth, too wide, too much - and also not enough.

He eyes the two coming down the path. Their smiles are just *perfect*. A step ahead is Wilbur Soot, his dark hair windswept and his hands deep in the pockets of his blue coat. Behind him, following - always following - is Tommy.

"We just finished writing up our policies," says Wilbur.

Quackity tries to keep the confusion from splitting his expression open. *Policies?*

"We're the fucking *best*." Tommy slings an arm around Wilbur's shoulders. They stood together with the brilliant sun behind them, their tall shadows swallowing Quackity whole.

"Is that so?" Quackity tilts his head to consider them both. Old kids on the block.

Quackity has not been here long, but he's heard the stories. They founded a country, fought and died and clawed their way back to life just to fight for it again. He admires their determination with the same breath that he envies it.

He wonders what it feels like to have something to fight for.

"Yeah," Wilbur says softly, shrugging, and the movement draws Quackity's attention to the book sticking out of his coat pocket.

"What are you writing there?" Quackity asks.

"Should we tell him?"

Wilbur turns to Tommy. A conversation passes between them through that one glance. Tommy steps away from Wilbur and holds his palms up, giving the decision wholly to the older kid.

"Let's give him a sneak preview," Wilbur says, and gestures for Quackity to start walking.

The three of them set down the Prime Path. Quackity watches their shadows move across the planks - a three-headed creature with limbs moving off-kilter.

Wilbur takes a breath, releases it. "We're running for president."

The shadow-beast with three heads loses one as Quackity skids to a halt, staring after the two of them with wide, unblinking eyes.

"You're *what*?" he demands.

Wilbur and Tommy look back at him with confusion. Clearly, this is not the reaction they expected. With furrowed eyebrows, Wilbur repeats, as if there was a possibility Quackity had simply misheard him, "We're running for president of L'manberg, Quackity, because, like--" Quackity heard him the first time. "President?" he breathes. "*President*?"

He wasn't even aware this country *had* a president, let alone that one could run for the office. He feels like he has been playing a game, and here came Wilbur Soot to tell him that everyone else was playing a different one. Tag, instead of hide-and-seek. How low can you go, instead of how far can you run. Solitaire, instead of chess.

Wilbur makes a motion for them to start walking again, and Tommy follows. After a beat, Quackity does, too, but he keeps a weary distance as they begin to approach the L'manberg walls, its black-and-yellow walls reminding him of honey bees drifting from flower to flower, their little lives spent rolling in pollen and nectar.

But if Quackity squints, just so, they are deadly hornets warning him to stay the fuck away.

Wilbur tucks his hands behind his back as he walks, like a prisoner being led to the gallows.

"We need to prove that we are good enough, you know?" he muses and that, at least, Quackity understands. "People aren't listening to us."

Quackity hesitates, and Tommy throws his head back to laugh.

"That's why you're not part of L'manberg, man," says Wilbur.

Tommy looks over his shoulder at Quackity, his eyes sparkling with curiosity. "Where are you actually from?"

Good question, Quackity thinks.

With a confidence he doesn't feel, Quackity grins his too-much grin and says, "I'm from God's kingdom. That's all I'm gonna say."

They pass under the honey bee walls and enter the country, and Wilbur comes alive. The Prime Path is where Tommy thrives, grinning under the sun and swinging to his own melody, but L'manberg is Wilbur's, through and through, or maybe Wilbur was L'manberg's. Either way, it is clear this is his element. His boots are near-silent on the grass, as if the very ground of this place was reminding him that it would always be there to break his fall.

Wilbur breathes in deeply, lit by the sunlight streaming through the canopy of leaves overhead.

He reaches into his pocket and takes out the book Quackity saw before, and reads out their policies, and as they go through all their little reasons and all their little jokes, he thinks, *They can't be serious,* and then he sees the spark behind Wilbur's eyes and Tommy's triumphant expression, and he thinks, *Good God, they are.*

And afterwards, Wilbur looks across at Quackity, still with that perfect smile,

and Quackity knows what he has to do.

So, with Wilbur and Tommy still looking on, he builds a platform. He climbs to the top until he rises above them both, a creature of one head, four limbs, and a heart beating loud enough for the whole country to hear.

"I have an announcement," Quackity says, and for the first time, all eyes are on him. "I will not be part of this democracy injustice."

Wilbur's perfect smile slips.

"Wilbur Soot," calls Quackity, like a non-believer forced to prayer, "and TommyInnit. You're both a couple of *losers*."

Tommy begins to protest. Wilbur begins to doubt. Suddenly, the shape of his country's walls is unfamiliar to him.

Quackity continues, fueled by something he cannot name. "You are a threat to our democracy."

He wonders if they notice it. *Our*. As if he belongs here with them. But they don't correct him, and he knows he has his chance.

"A single party? *A single party?*" he says with incredulity. "Are you kidding me?"

"We are the Right and the Best Party," Wilbur insists.

Their eyes meet. Honey bee and hornet.

"There's another party, pal," Quackity says, voice low. "I am going to run against you, Wilbur, and I don't *fucking care*."

Doesn't care that this isn't his country to run for. Doesn't care that he's going against L'manberg's darlings. This is his chance, and he isn't going to let it slip from his fingers.

"What do you mean you're going to run against us?" Wilbur demands. "You're not even part of L'manberg!"

He throws this at Quackity now, but the color drains from his face when he realizes it's possible. That is all Quackity needs. A possibility.

"My party," he declares, "is called the SWAG Party."

Tommy edges closer to Wilbur and asks, almost nervously, "What's our party called, Wilbur?"

That he needs a reminder makes it clear to Quackity what Tommy is in all of this - just a child following the bigger kid around the playground.

With less certainty than before, Wilbur says, "The Right, The Best Party. That's what you said."

Tommy frowns as he stares up at Quackity. "That's not good," he murmurs under his breath. "It doesn't hit as hard."

"Okay," breathes Wilbur. "We'll change it."

And that's how Quackity knows he's joined the game now.

Wilbur's expression twists as he points towards the gate. "You're gone," he orders with a scowl. "You're *gone*."

Quackity shrugs as he hops off his platform. He can feel their stares burning holes into his back as he swaggers out, but he doesn't look back once.

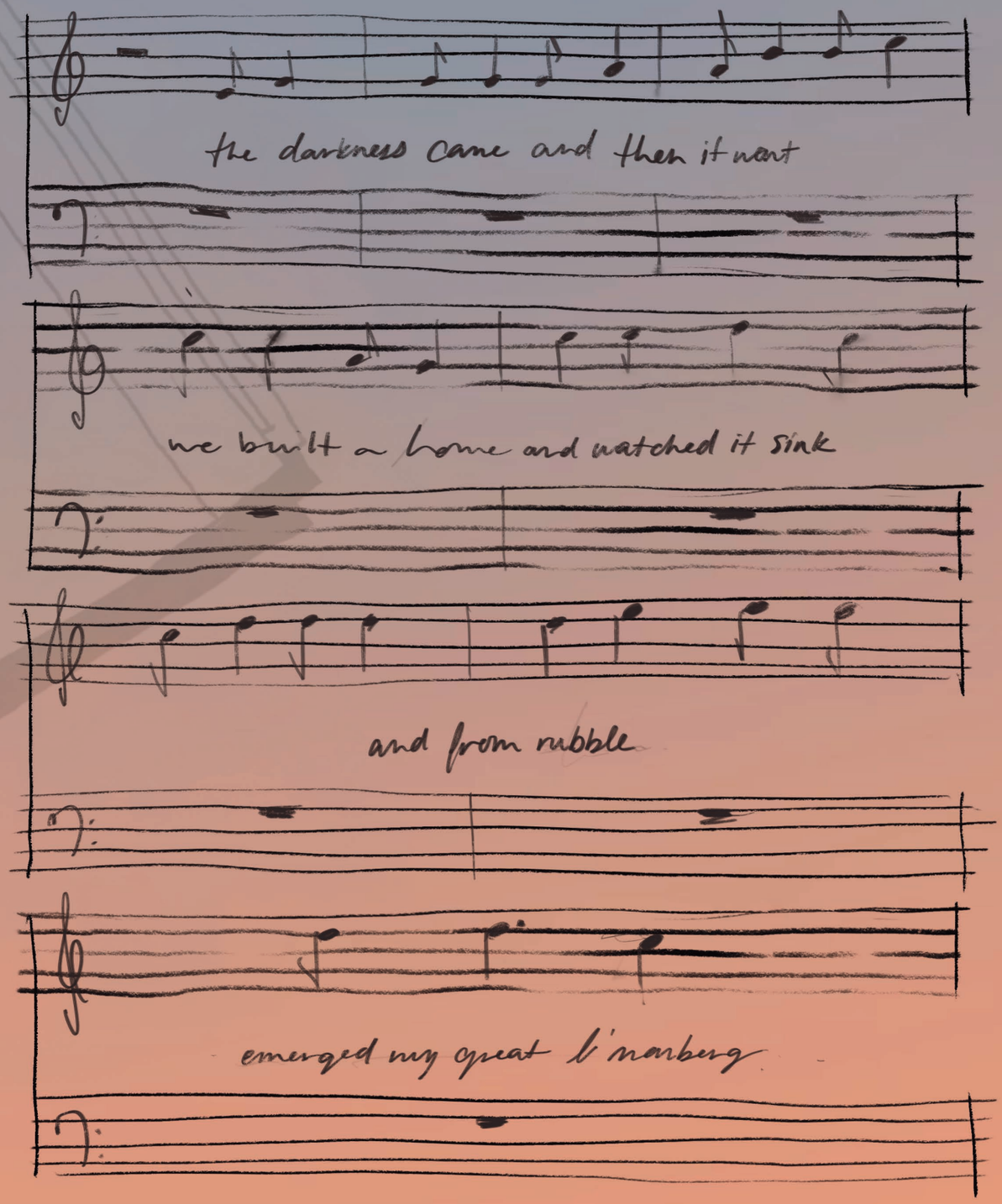
"SWAG Party!" he calls out as he exits. "SWAG Party 2020!"

Their stunned silence is music to his ears.

He walks the Prime Path. The wooden planks do not recognize his footfalls, but they will soon enough. Because Quackity is the wild card now. He threw a wrench into the works and now they have no other choice but to know his name. Nobody knows what he'll do next. And that's where all of the fun lies.

Because Quackity is the new kid on the block, and that makes him dangerous.

Election


the darkness came and then it went
we built a home and watched it sink
and from rubble
emerged my great l'norberg

WILBUR SOOT AND TOMMYINNIT
VS
QUACKITY AND GEORGENOTFOUND

OK, SO FIRST OFF LETS TALK TERRITORIES.
WHO'S ALLOWED IN THEM, WHO'S NOT.

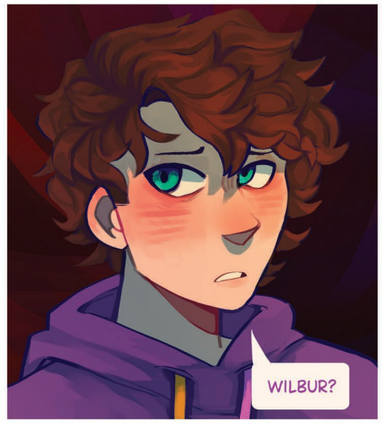
I THINK I'LL BE GIVING THIS ONE TO QUACKITY.

AHEM

IT'S REALLY NO SECRET THAT L'MANBERG HAS A LONG HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THOSE THAT ARE NOT APART OF IT.
I MYSELF CANNOT ENTER L'MANBERG BECAUSE OF THE POLICIES THAT THESE MEN HAVE SET, AND DO I NOT AGREE WITH THEM.

AND THAT'S WHY...
I'M GONNA LET EVERYONE INTO L'MANBERG BECAUSE ITS A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY THAT DESERVES TO BE SEEN BY EVERYONE IN THE DREAM SMP!

YEAH!
LET'S GOOOOO!
WOO!


WILBUR?

FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER THE DREAM SMP HAS OSTRACIZED MY PEOPLE.
L'MANBERG IS NOT A PLACE OF OPPRESSION, IT IS A SANCTUARY.

WHAT YOU ARE INTENDING TO DO IS TO COME INTO OUR LAND AND OPEN IT UP TO THOSE VERY PEOPLE WE SOUGHT TO ESCAPE.
ALL BECAUSE WE CREATED BETTER LIVES FOR OURSELVES.

THIS IS TYRANNY AND I WILL NOT STAND FOR IT.

I AGREE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT WORD MEANS...

...
AGREE MEANS "YES", TUBBO.

YOU SEE, WILBUR HERE IS EMBRACING TRADITION. YOU HAVE TO REALISE THAT WE'RE A BRAND NEW GENERATION OF POLITICIANS HERE.

YOUR OLD POLICIES WILL JUST HURT PROGRESS!

THESE POLICIES WERE FORMED FROM BLOOD.

AND YET THEY ALL GROW FROM WAR. YOU'RE WARMONGERING, WILBUR! YOU-

OF COURSE THEY DID! WE WERE BEING OPPRESSED!

I LED THESE PEOPLE TO FREEDOM AND SO I WILL UPHOLD THOSE POLICIES THAT FREED US.

L'MANBERG'S BORDERS WILL REMAIN CLOSED FOR AS LONG AS I AM IN CHARGE.

SIGH

LET'S JUST MOVE ON.

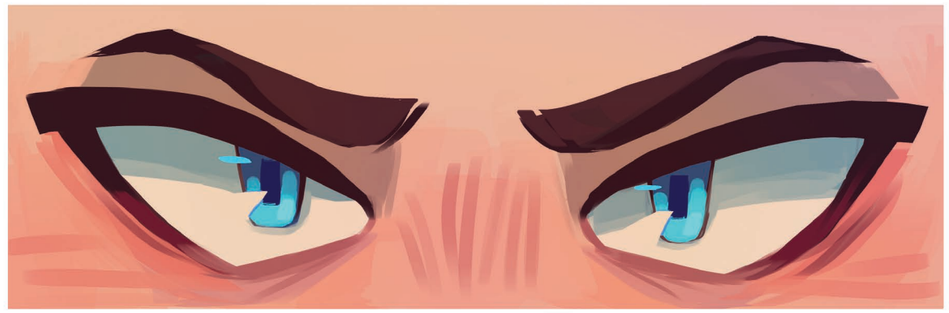
WELL... IN THAT CASE LET'S MOVE ONTO

HEALTHCARE
DEATH PENALTY
PET KILLING
CORRUPTION

SOME TIME LATER...

AAAAND LASTLY TAXES, SO-

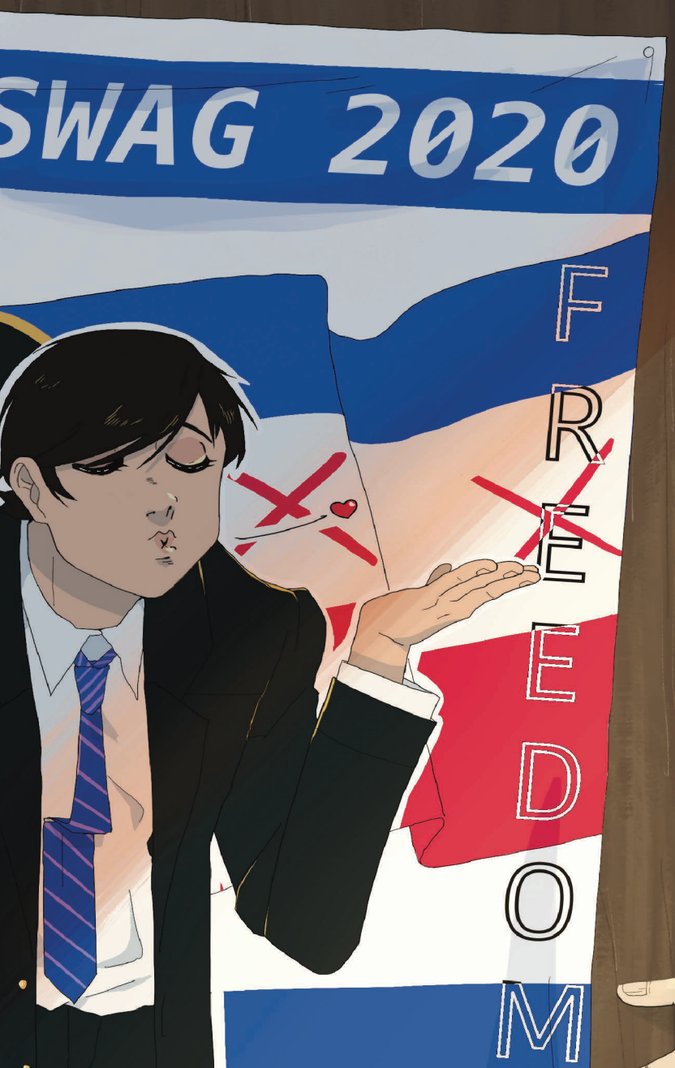
ACTUALLY I THINK WE'RE DONE HERE.



LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD.

NO MORE POG
"IT'S NOT A PHASE, DAD!"
Coconut 2020

Freedom In Solitude
General
President
SO
OT


SWAG 2020
FREEDOM

GUNS
SCHLATT

DEMOCRACY IS OVERRATED

YEAH,YEAH THAT'S RIGHT!
WAIT- WAIT NO!
STICK TO THE SCRIPT
YOU THINK YOU NEED A PRESIDENT?
YOU- YOU THINK YOU NEED A-

I'LL BECOME MY OWN PRESIDENT
I'LL RUN MYSELF
STICK TO THE SCRIPT! STICK TO THE SCRIPT!!
NO NO NO
YOU THINK YOU NEED QUACKITY AS PRESIDENT?!?
HIS VICE PRESIDENT STOLE MY WOMAN!
HA HA HA
YOU THINK YOU WANT WILBUR?
YEAH! YEAH! WILBU POG!

HE STOLE MY HEART

SCHLATT-

SOB

SNIFFLE

GLUUUURRRP

THIS IS SO AWFUL WHY DO I KEEP DRINKING IT?

PLEASE JUST READ THE SCRIPT!

FOLLOW THE SCRIPT! WE PAID YOU SO MUCH MONEY

FINE I GOT IT- I GOT THE SCRIPT

-SHUFFLE-

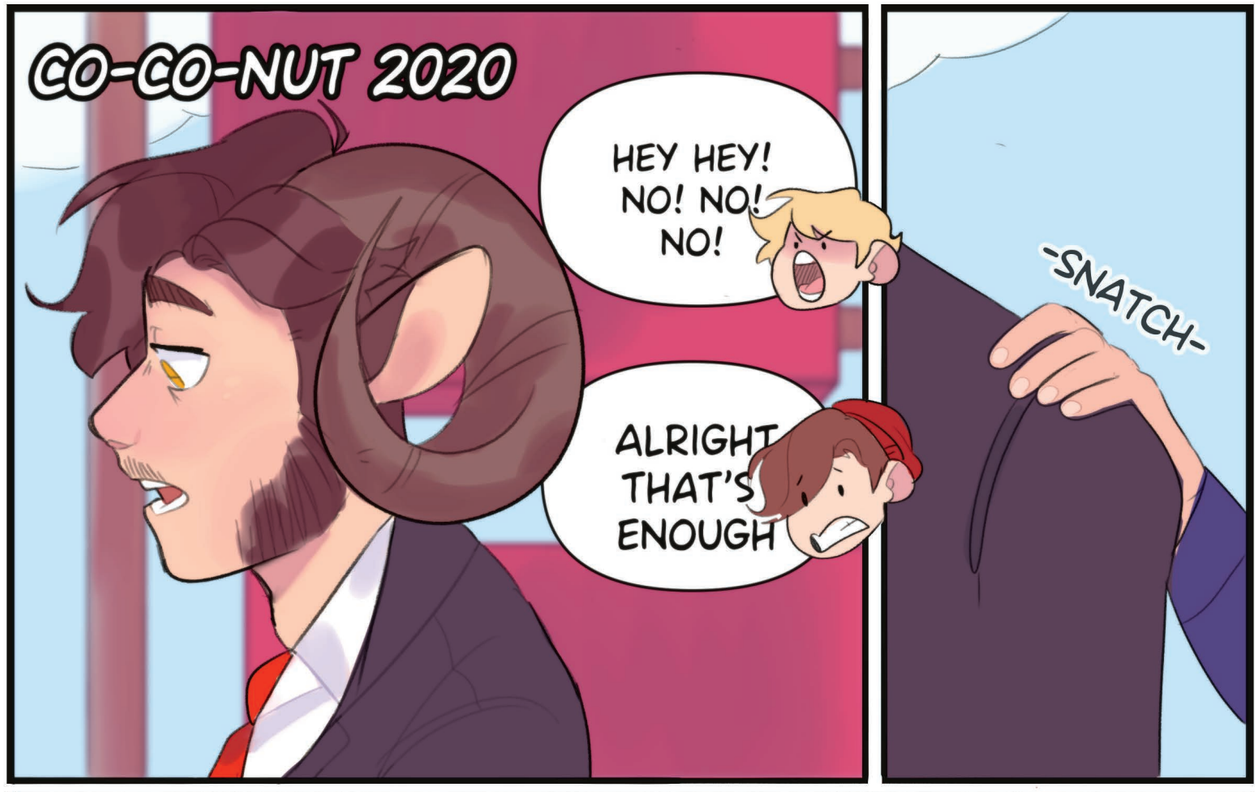
PAGE 4 RIGHT?

BRITISH

BLA BLA BITCH

VIRGO

...VOTE...


CO-CO-NUT 2020
HEY HEY! NO! NO! NO!
ALRIGHT THAT'S ENOUGH
-SNATCH-

GIVE IT UP TO OUR ENDORSEMENT EVERYONE!
-BICKER-
-BICKER-
??
-BICKER-
-BICKER-

I'LL RUN MY OWN PRESIDENCY!!!

THUD!

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE END OF ME!

END?

Vote Swag 2020
VOTE POG MORON!!!
ABSENT.
SWAG
CHANGE.
P·O·G 2020
The Universe is Indifferent
— Schlaff 2020
SEVERAL WEEKS LATER...

Deal With the Devil

RIKEN

If Quackity had to choose a point in time where Wilbur Soot's resolve began to crumble, it would be the split second that Dream had announced his support for Schlatt.

In a fit of panic, Wilbur had begun to run, and Quackity found himself being dragged by Tommy to talk, presumably out of the prying ears of Dream and Schlatt.

He can see the fear in the duo's eyes as they run through the tunnel, footsteps echoing in a chamber where nobody but themselves can see the raw panic scrawled across their faces as if a kindergartner used crude crayons. Tommy, the golden child. Wilbur, the golden founder of L'manberg. How the people have fallen.

Quackity wonders if he's going insane, because he's running with them, and that lumps him together with the golden duo, the perfect boys. He feels out of place. He's no statue fashioned from precious ores. He's a man who clawed through the darkness into existence.

"What are— what are we gonna do?" Tommy breathily says, attempting to pull conversation, and Wilbur's jaw quirks into a scowl.

New footsteps clang through the long, winding tunnels behind them like an inevitable tide of death. *Schlatt and Dream.*

"You can't just run away from the event!" Schlatt yells, and though it sounds lighthearted, Quackity doesn't want to know if or when the man will drop his humor. "Come back! We can all discuss things through. Besides, isn't it more fun when things get tossed into a loop? You gotta react, think! Planning won't push you everywhere, loverboy!"

Quackity's shoulder to shoulder with Wilbur. Even from here, the taller man's aura is suffocating.

"When the silver tongued man runs out of words to speak," Quackity starts

as they turn into a dead end, "Can he bite instead of bark?"

He can't read Wilbur's expression as well as Tommy can, but one quick glance tells him enough— something along the lines of *shut the fuck up, Quackity*, before it morphs into one of calm calculation. It's *scary,* really, how fast the man can adapt. Too bad the same hands that write such eloquent words can't hold a sword to save his own life.

"Quackity," Wilbur starts, "We're the same."

We aren't, he thinks, but he bites his tongue and stays silent.

"So…" Wilbur says carefully, turning to face Quackity, back pressed against the cool wall. The footsteps had stopped a while ago, but Quackity hadn't noticed— his heartbeat is as loud and as fast as the footsteps, beating like a hummingbird's frail, frail wings.

Humor me.

"Let's make a joint coalition," Wilbur says, and this time Quackity tries to rationally think it through, because it's tempting and the charisma that oozes from the man's pores even in a potential life-or-death situation is so goddamn *sickening*.

He finds that his mind is already set— has been set, really, since the beginning.

Quackity taps his chin, mimicking deep contemplation, watching Wilbur's expression contort in the corner of his eyes as the temperature in the tunnel ticks up a few notches. Metal scrapes against the floor like bow against violin, music to Quackity's ears.

"Dream," Tommy says carefully, stretching his arms out in a placating gesture.

"Tommy," Dream says from behind Quackity.

Wilbur's lips press into thin lines, awaiting Quackity's choice. Despite the gnarly situation, his shoulders are lax, and he tilts his chin upwards confidently. He *believes* that Quackity will accept, Quackity realizes, and that epiphany only makes his answer so much sweeter. He tips his own chin down, staring directly at Wilbur.

"No."

He turns slowly to face Dream and Schlatt, suppressing a smile.

"*No?*" Wilbur parrots in disbelief. The phrase hugs the walls and is thrown back in an echo, filling up the empty space with his resounding voice. Quackity waits for the reverberation to vanish before speaking up again.

"Dream, would you be so kind as to put away the weapons? We are, after all, simply talking. Yeah?"

Silence. The flaxen haired man doesn't budge.

"No, no," Schlatt says, voice a deep baritone. "Let him speak without having the

prospect of getting skewered present."

Dream relents, but Quackity knows that if Dream wanted, he could arm himself faster than Tommy can drop another curse.

"The reason *why* I denied your offer," Quackity explains, finding the confidence to spread his arms out, "Is because, Wilbur, your promises are *empty*." Wilbur opens his mouth, but Quackity gestures for him to shut up. "Let me explain before you start jumping on me. Wilbur, you're a fine man, but what you forgot to do when negotiating with me is realize two very fundamental things."

Which is? Tommy's eyes seem to ask.

"One, you did not offer any indicative position of power. You just said *join me* in the heat of the moment. I'm sure you don't want to split whatever jurisdiction you have as president too much, so you've made it intentionally vague— don't justify it by saying you forgot to clarify." *Do you take me for a fool?* He doesn't say that last thought out loud, instead opting to clench his teeth and smile. "Besides, the offer is conditional, assuming *if* you win, and if I'll be honest, Wilbur Soot, I'm starting to doubt the golden man."

"*Quackity*," Wilbur warns. Or pleads, maybe. His voice doesn't crack, but it has a tinge of raspy desperation woven into it.

Quackity tips his chin down in mock acknowledgement at Wilbur before turning back to Dream and Schlatt. "Wilbur." Dream's expression is completely obscured by his mask, but even Quackity can tell the man flinches at his next words. "Schlatt, let's combine forces."

"What the *hell*," Tommy says, more out of surprise than malice.

"Quackity!" The man bellows, his own smile razor sharp. "You've got balls, I'll tell you that. But seeing as you completely crushed Loverboy's ego here, I'm interested. We *will* talk about the conditions…" Schlatt's eyes narrow. "...*After* we take care of these two."

"Hold on," Wilbur stammers, but even he is at a complete loss of words as Schlatt's fingers twitch and Dream takes a step forward, shoes punctuating the silence in a crisp snap. "Quackity, you were just assuming. I could have slipped…"

"Did you?"

Wilbur's lips form a *yes*, but his eyes are clearer than ever.

The weight of the sword Dream hands him is surprisingly light. Quackity exchanges a glance with Schlatt, who grips an identical weapon.

The sword's blade gleams as Quackity brings it up. He sees the reflection of Wilbur's face in it. Tommy's eyes, as hard as glittering diamonds. Schlatt's triumphant smile. A fragment of Dream's mask. His own eyes, sharp and determined and *victorious*.

"Begone, Wilbur Soot and Tommyinnit!"

IOWN
FISH

born to heal, so prone to die

IZZY

It begins, as many things have, with two boys on a bench.

The August sun is high in the sky, its intensity creating small heat waves on the grass nearby that Tommy can see if he squints enough. They don't come to this bench often, not since the Revolution has forced them both out of the Greater SMP, but they've managed to find a time to sneak away just this once—one of the rare moments where they truly get to be kids and not child soldiers fighting an adult war.

"How do you think it'll go?" He asks Tubbo whose expression becomes pinched. He looks as if he wants to answer any question but that one, but he knows Tommy will press anyway. When Tommy gets anxious, all he wants to do is talk.

"I don't know," Tubbo answers truthfully. "I think you'll win." It's half a lie, because maybe Tubbo does believe it, but he lacks the unbridled optimism Tommy has always carried around.

"I think we've got a pretty good shot," Tommy says. "I mean, we're up against Quackity, who's new, and Schlatt, who's awful, so…" He trails off, staring down at the horizon as if he can beat it in a staring contest.

"I don't know," Tubbo repeats. "I really don't. It's up to the people, I guess."

"The people love Wilbur," Tommy says. He breaks eye contact with the edge of the sky to look at Tubbo. The way his eyes fall means it's less of a statement and more of a question.

"Not all of them do," Tubbo answers truthfully. "Dream doesn't, and neither do George and Quackity."

"The ones that matter do," Tommy snorts. "They're all that's important."

Tubbo hums noncommittally and his eyes take up Tommy's place on the skyline. For a few minutes, the world is silent.

Tommy heaves a long sigh, standing up and brushing his hands against his thighs.

It's an act that's so Tommy it makes Tubbo pause for a moment and think about their situation, think about how strange it is that a sixteen year old would ever be trusted as Vice President.

"Let's go," he says, nodding his head at Tubbo. This time it is not a question.

Their walk down the Prime Path is mostly silent. It feels almost as if they're about to lose something, though Tommy keeps insisting they'll win.

"You spoke to Schlatt, didn't you?" Tommy asks. Tubbo blinks in shock, once, twice.

"Yes," Tubbo admits. "I did."

"Don't," Tommy says. "He's evil. I don't want—don't talk to him."

"Okay," Tubbo says, because he can't bring himself to say no. Not when Tommy's like this, guarded and anxious and all the signs that he's secretly worried but doesn't want to show it. Not when Tommy's a step away from being vulnerable.

When they round the path and the L'Manberg walls come into view, it feels like coming home.

"Do you remember," Tubbo asks, "the time these walls went up?"

He does. It had been sunrise, the dawn of a new day for the Greater SMP. He and Wilbur had sat there for hours making yellow concrete to top off blackstone walls, the colors chosen half out of a lack of resources and half out of a love of bees. Tommy thinks that day was the first time he ever felt he truly belonged on this server, turning powder to concrete with Wilbur.

"It was such a big project," Tommy says. "Little did we know, eh?"

"Especially about Eret," Tubbo remarks. And it's true that Eret had been a big help with putting up the walls. The day they betrayed L'Manberg was the worst of them all. Sometimes, when Tommy closes his eyes, he can still hear the ringing in his ears from explosions set off too close followed by the unmistakable smell of gunpowder.

"Fuck Eret," Tommy says, though it comes out as more of a longing whisper, a wish for better times.

"It's in the song and everything," Tubbo agrees. He smiles at Tommy, tight and

guarded. Tommy wonders just when they both grew up enough to learn how to seal off their emotions. He wishes he could live this moment truthfully, be the kids he and Tubbo are supposed to be, but he can't because the walls are as high as the tensions around him and a president is getting elected.

"Do you think we'll win?" Tommy asks again, vulnerable. He seems every bit the unqualified boy he is, trailing in footsteps too big to ever fill, a weight on his shoulders he can't begin to bear.

"Yes," Tubbo says, because it's what Tommy needs to hear right now. He doesn't know if he believes it this time.

They pass the walls silently now, the dark blackstone that once felt like home (and maybe it still does, maybe somewhere deep and unreachable now, buried under strife and pain and so much fear) feeling more like a promise of something bad. The sky shines blue above, but Tommy half expects clouds to roll in all the same.

Tubbo is the first to set foot on the election site, his uniformed boots clacking harshly against the cobblestone laid out to create a floor. It is Tommy's favorite block, but it makes him sick to see it like this, see it with blood red carpeting and empty chairs waiting.

Above them, so much closer to the vast sky, stands Schlatt on a podium. The water rushes down harshly, but not quite harsh enough to drown out the voices fighting, Schlatt's flippancy wafting out over Quackity's anger.

If Tommy were paying more attention, he would recognize the signs of goading, how Schlatt is using those surrounding him to get what he wants. He doesn't, though, because he is a child first and foremost, shoved into a coat too large and a world too unforgiving.

So it is Tubbo who clambers up to the podium first and it is Tommy who follows, behind and diligent and naive. It is Tubbo who steps up on the creaking wood first, but it is Tommy who speaks, loud and bright and determined.

"Ready to lose?" Tommy asks, grinning sharply. He's mastered that quickly, the art of small facial quirks that can be used to sting and bite and claw the way words can.

It doesn't work on Schlatt. The man grins lazily back, extracting himself from where he's leaning casually against Quackity.

"Confident, are we?" Schlatt asks, though it's a question, meant to sting where it hurts.

"Of course," Tommy says. Schlatt's comment has hit its mark. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"It's not like there's much of a competition," Schlatt says, rounding on Tommy, sizing him up like a particularly fresh piece of meat. His voice seems to echo from all sides as he surveyed the kid, watching and categorizing every insecurity. "I mean, I've got this in the bag."

Tommy thinks of Wilbur—strong, steady Wilbur, who has lived and fought and died for this nation—and knows he needs to win.

"Like anyone would even vote for you," Tommy snarks back. "You were an endorsement."

"I'm the voice of the people!" Schlatt counters. "You and your *brother* are nothing more than washed-up tyrants."

"No," Tommy says, defiant. "No. We're the good guys."

Schlatt smirks at this, returning to his microphone. "Get off my podium," he growls. Tommy doesn't obey.

"You know what, Schlatt," Tommy breathes, preparing to launch into a speech. "You ugly ass—"

He's cut off by a sharp hand on his shoulder, shaking slightly. He doesn't need to turn around to know who it is.

"It's time," Wilbur Soot says. There is much work to do before the election.

NOW , THIS LEAVES THE TWO MAJOR FRONT RUNNERS AS THE FINAL OPTION

IN SECOND PLACE WITH 30% OF THE POPULAR VOTE

IS LED BY THE PARTY LEADER ....

Hold

GULP

QUACKITY !!

MEANING THAT THE WINNER OF THE POPULAR VOTE.

WITH 45% IS THE PARTY OF POG 2020

wait

SHOOK

WHAT?!

WE WON!

YAAAA!

WE DID IT!!!

WE WON!!!

WE WON!!!

HOWEVER!!

LISTEN! PLEASE STOP!

...

TWO NIGHTS AGO, QUACKITY MADE A DEAL. THEY ARRANGED THAT THEY WOULD PULL SWAG2020 VOTES ON WITH JSHLATT 2020 VOTES.

HE HE HE

POG2020 GOT 45% OF THE VOTES,

HE HE HE

WHILE THE COALITION OF SWAG2020 AND JSHLATT2020...

MIRK

GOT 46% OF THE VOTES.

MEANING THAT TONIGHT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ON TUESDAY THE 22ND OF SEPTEMBER 2020, JSHLATT2020 HAS BEEN INAUGURATED!

HUH
WTF
WHAT?!
WAIT.. WHY'RE YOU LEAVING.. WIL-
TOMMY.
GET OFF MY PODIUM.
TAP
TAP
WELL
THAT WAS PRETTY EASY.
NOW I WANT EVERY L'MANBERG CITIZEN TO LOOK ME IN THE EYES AND LISTEN TO ME.
THIS PLACE WILL BE A LOT DIFFERENT TOMORROW.
LET'S START MAKING IT HAPPEN SHALL WE ?
MY FIRST DECREE
AS THE PRESIDENT OF L'MANBERG-
THE EMPEROR!!!
OF THIS GREAT COUNTRY-

-IS TO REVOKE THE CITIZENSHIP

-OF WILBURSOOT AND TOMMYINNIT!

W-WILBUR

WHAT THE FUCK, WILBUR

TOMMY...

TOMMY,
RUN!!!
SHNK
TOMMY, I DIDN'T EXPECT THIS TO HAPPEN,
WILBUR-
WIL, I GAVE UP MY DISCS FOR THIS NATION.
WE GAVE UP EVERYTHING.
WE'RE UNWELCOME IN THE DREAM SMP...
WE'RE UNWELCOME IN L'MANBERG...
WE HAVE NOTHING.

demolition
THCSCUS

The pickaxe is heavy in Fundy's hands, and it grows heavier with every swing. Its sharp edge breaks through stone and glass, scattering the debris around him like fractured sunlight. His shoulders stoop with the weight of dust and shards and something else that cuts deeper to the bone.

But he has to keep swinging.

If only daddy dearest can see me now, he thinks, wiping sweat off his brow for half a heartbeat before going back to work. What a sight he must be to the L'manberg citizens looking on. The son of their founder, tearing apart the walls his own father had built. Would they think it was a tantrum? A simple case of attention-seeking? Teenage rebellion?

It would be easy to wave him away, to dismiss him as easily as his father does. *Did*. He thinks about his father's eyes falling on golden-haired Tommy and never wavering. He thinks about his father choosing Tommy for vice president, for right-hand man, for *everything*. He thinks about the two of them standing together on a raised platform, speaking about their country, their policies, their people.

He thinks about his arms struggling to find the holes of his ill-fitting uniform jacket as he ran after them, insisting, "I'm frightening and I'm menacing and I'm *dangerous*," only for his father to smile and wrap a heavy arm around his shoulders.

"My son," Wilbur whispered then, pressing his cheek against the top of Fundy's hair, "my sweet boy. My little champion," even as Fundy seethed. Wilbur's affection tasted like poison on his tongue.

Would they blame Fundy for spitting it out?

His pickaxe punctures through the brick. He can hear chaos behind him, the death throes of a nation splintering. Allegiances questioned and tested and broken on Schlatt's wheel.

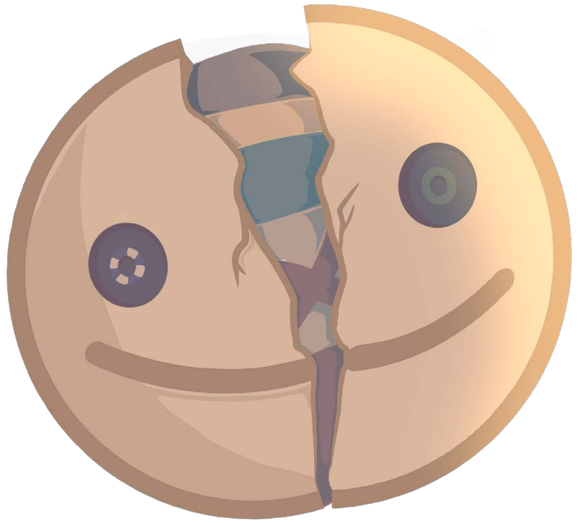
He blinks dust from his eyes and continues his grim work, shattering stubborn stone with his own trembling hands and crushing whatever remains under his boots. A lone boy on top of the world, his pastel colors paling against the black-and-yellow concrete of his father's walls.

He can see Jack coming up behind him, a pickaxe of his own held tight in his grip. They are all that remains of his father's merry band, and that should make them brothers in name if not by blood.

Jack smiles at Fundy before he swings his pickaxe against the wall, breaking through to the light beyond. Fundy's answering grin falls short, and he ducks his head towards his duty before Jack can notice. Fundy listens to the rhythmic *thud, thud, thud* of their pickaxes instead of the *thud, thud, thud* of his foolish heart.

They work together as they once did when they still stood under the same flag.

But Fundy is aware of how, in reality, he stands alone.



MY SON!
MY SON IS TEARING DOWN THE WALLS IN FRONT OF ME!

THE WALLS
I BUILT
KEEP HIM SAFE.

A SPY'S
I PROMISED HIM THE WORLD.

I CAN'T.
I'M LEAVING, I CAN'T WATCH THIS ANYMORE.

WILBUR.

I'M NOT SURE WE CAN DO THIS, WE HAD A LIFE THERE.

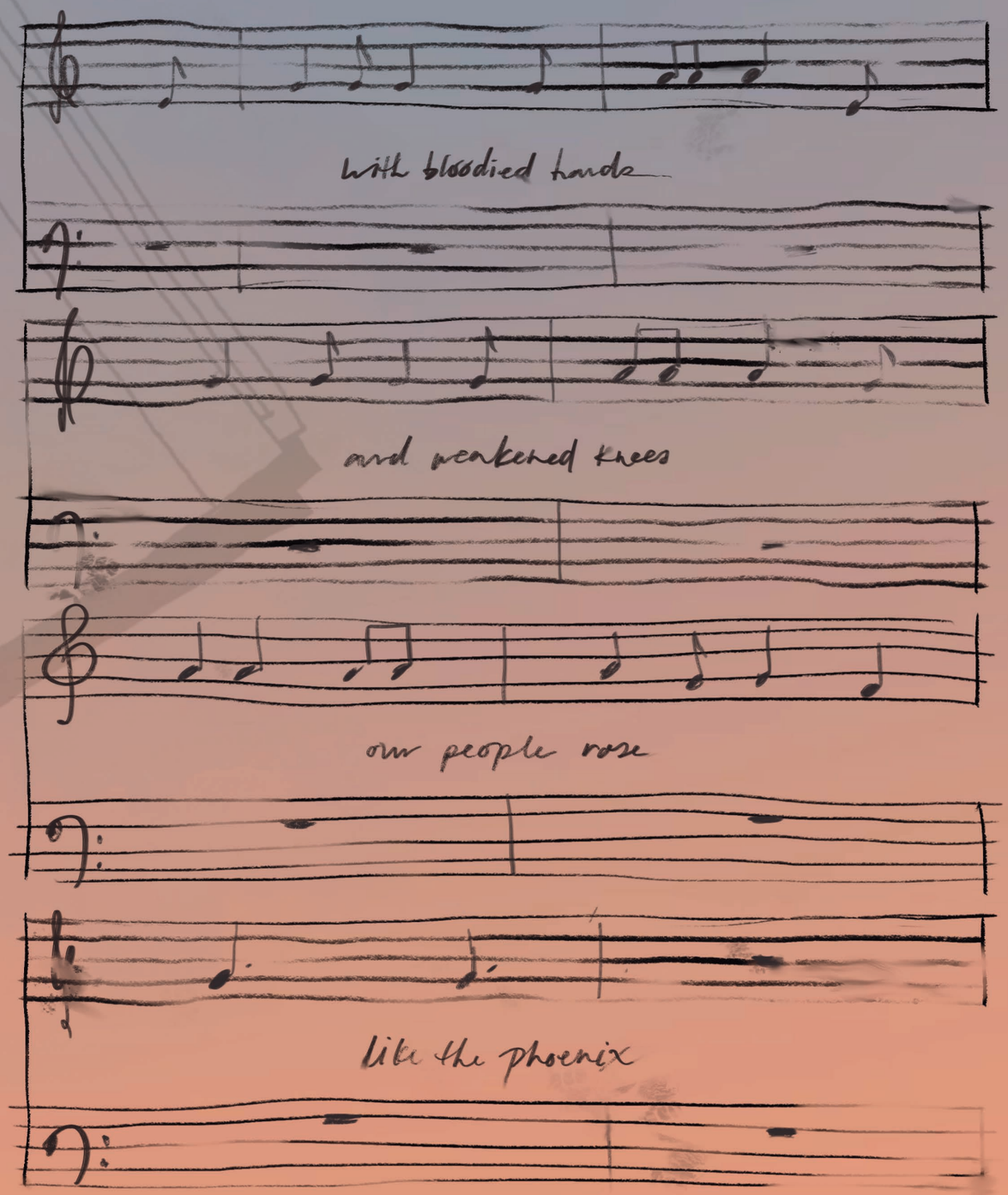
OVER THE NEXT COUPLE WEEKS I'M GONNA BE A DIFFERENT MAN THAN THE ONE JSCHLATT CROSSED.
I CAN FEEL IT TOMMY.

WE NEED TO CONSTRUCT A BARRACKS, WE NEED TO MAKE IT HIDDEN, UNDERGROUND.
AND WE HAVE TO TAKE BACK L'MANBERG.

I THINK IT'S TIME WE ASK FOR HELP.

TECHNOBLADE
JOINED THE GAME

REBELLION

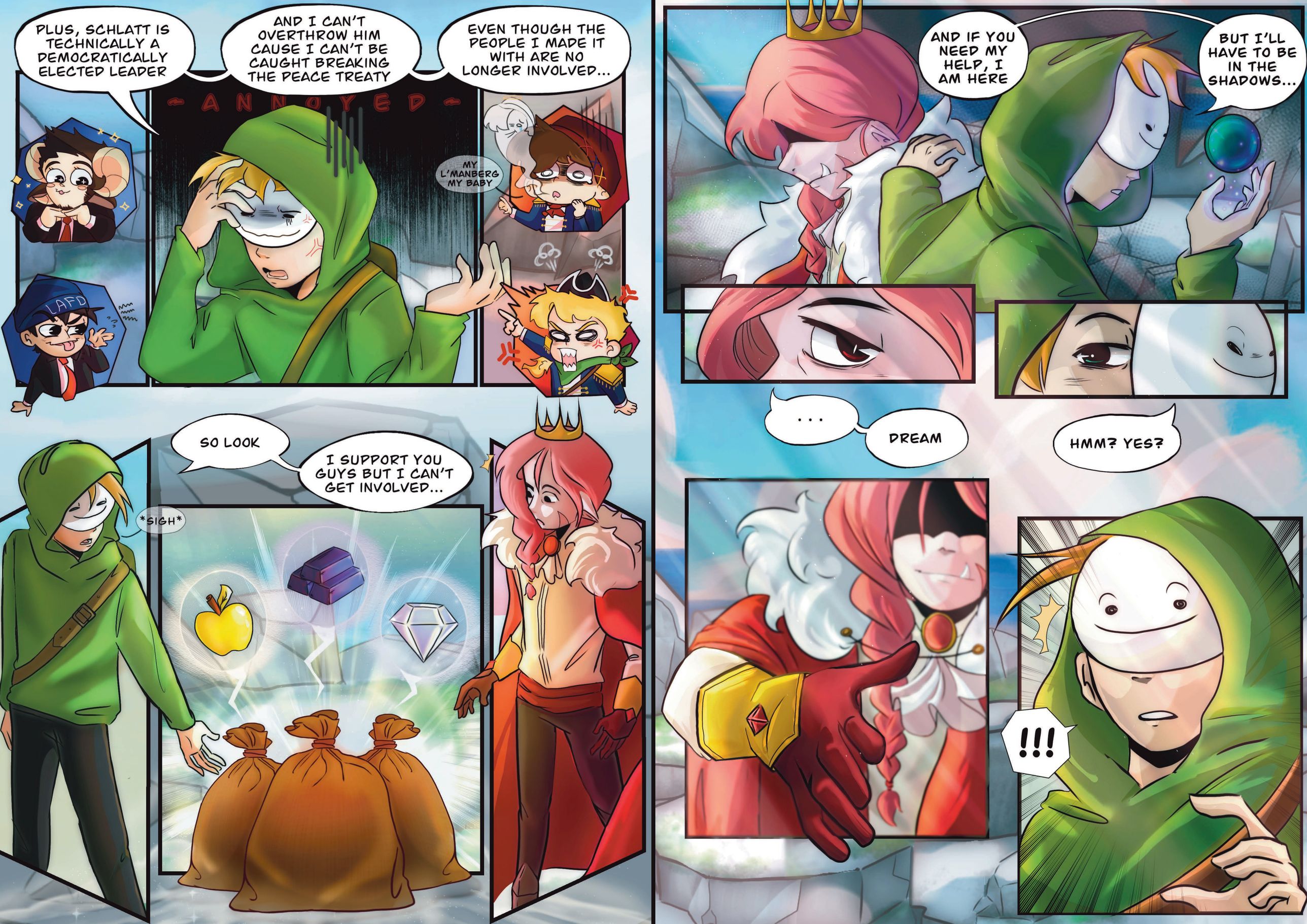

with bloodied hands
and weakened knees
our people rose
like the phoenix

OWN
FISH

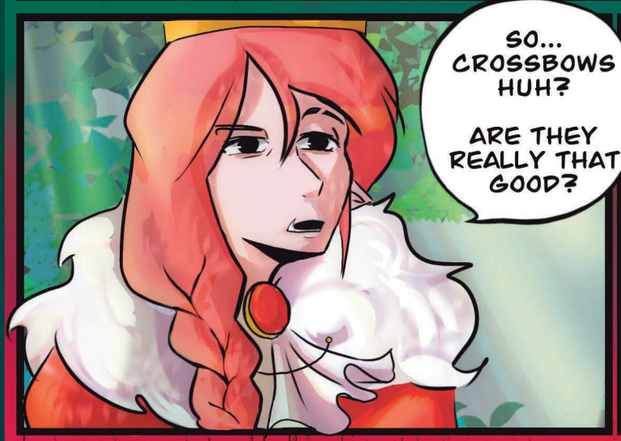
WILBUR! THIS IS GREAT! WE HAVE TECHNO ON OUR SIDE!
HE CAN TRAIN US AND HELP US TAKE BACK L'MANBERG!
HEY, YOU GUYS GO ON AHEAD...
I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF
MeeT Me AT (-100, -250) -Dream :)
??
WELL LOOK WHO FINALLY SHOWED UP...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE HASN'T IT, TECHNO?

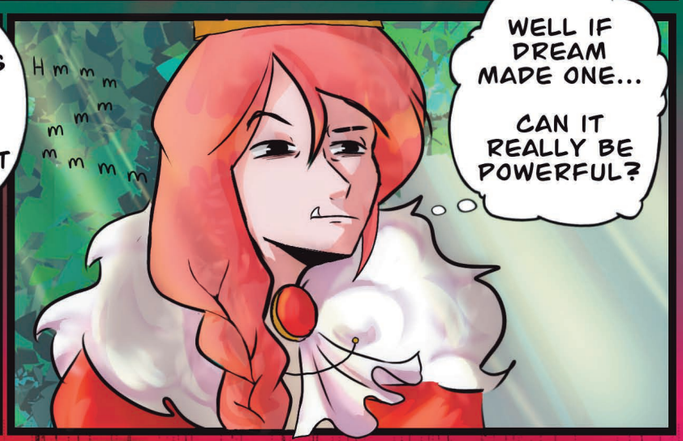
HOLD ON A MINUTE IS HE-
WAIT I NEED TO FIX THIS
TECHNO
WHAT ARE YOU-
PLOP
...
HMPH
WAS THAT REALLY NECESSARY?
DEFINITELY.

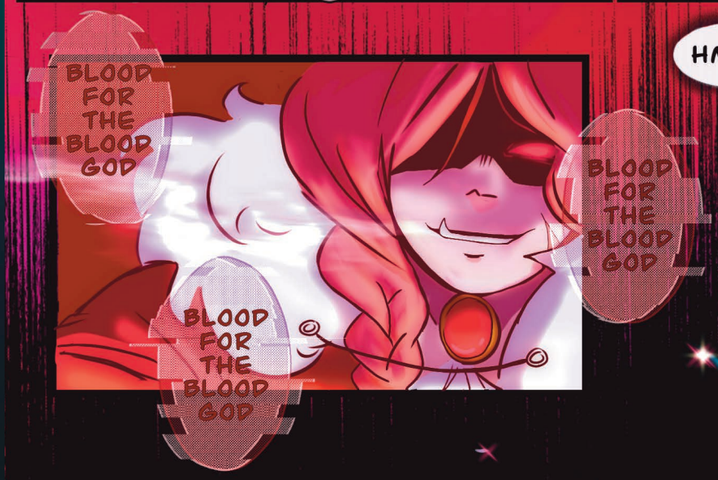
ANYWAYS
I LEFT A CHEST FOR TOMMY. DID YOU SEE IT?
YEAH I SAW. I'VE BEEN HIDING IT.
BUT WHY THE HASSLE?
WELL, JUST AS TOMMY WILL READ LATER...
I'VE REALIZED THE SITUATION AT HAND
YOU SEE...I REALIZED THAT SCHLATT IS NO WILBUR.
SCHLATT ONLY WANTS POWER
AND I DON'T KNOW IF PEACE CAN BE MAINTAINED WITH SCHLATT AT THE HELM.
LAST TIME I TRIED TO TAKE A STAND...
I WAS TOUTED AS THE VILLAIN

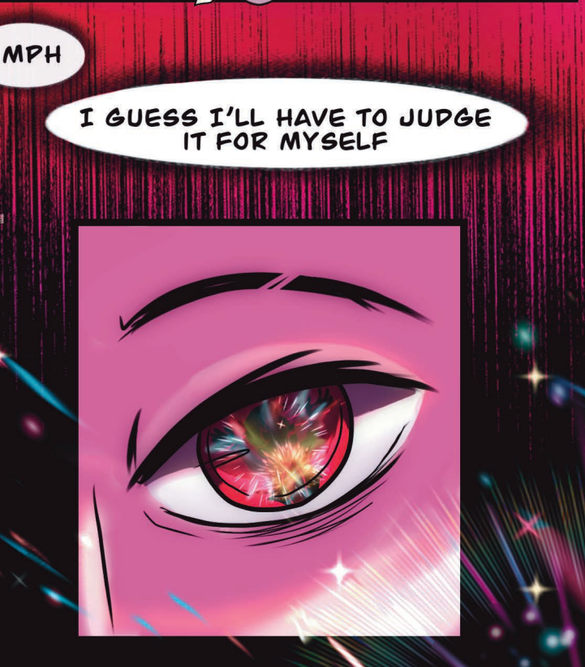

PLUS, SCHLATT IS TECHNICALLY A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LEADER
AND I CAN'T OVERTHROW HIM CAUSE I CAN'T BE CAUGHT BREAKING THE PEACE TREATY
EVEN THOUGH THE PEOPLE I MADE IT WITH ARE NO LONGER INVOLVED...
ANNOYED
MY L'MANBERG MY BABY
LAFD
SO LOOK
I SUPPORT YOU GUYS BUT I CAN'T GET INVOLVED...
SIGH
AND IF YOU NEED MY HELP, I AM HERE
BUT I'LL HAVE TO BE IN THE SHADOWS...
...
DREAM
HMM? YES?
!!!

PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU.









WHO KNOWS...

IT COULD PROVE TO BE USEFUL.

another lie from the front lines

IZZY

"Tubbo, as my secretary of state, as my RIGHT HAND MAN of L'Manberg, I need you to do something for me."

"What is it?"

"I need you to find Tommy. And I need you to show him the door."

The words feel unreal. Everything does. It is all happening too fast, crumbling before Tubbo's eyes like old walls, falling down around him. He feels as if he's living a dream, like any moment he will wake up back in the caravan in L'Manberg, and Wilbur will be singing the anthem softly while cooking breakfast, and all will be well. It doesn't. Time marches on, quickly and deliberately.

He doesn't want this. He thinks there was never a time he wanted this, the responsibility of being a child, of running a nation, of fighting in a war. He doesn't remember much from life before the Greater SMP, but he thinks kids shouldn't be involved in government.

He does remember Tommy in the stands—betrayed, hurt, destroyed Tommy, who so desperately wanted to belong it had backfired—and wishes, for just a moment, that he took it all back, ran screaming from Schlatt's side, told Tommy and Wilbur he would never betray them.

"You're taking the job?" Tommy had asked, voice breathy as it caught in his throat.

Schlatt threw his head back and laughed. "Of course he's taking the job!"

Then, all at once, Wilbur was tugging on Tommy's sleeve, and they were running, and they were vanishing into the night. Schlatt screeched at him, but Tubbo watched their bodies move behind buildings, rooted to the spot by the crushing weight of his actions.

He has betrayed them, undoubtedly, and completely. That burns more than Schlatt's hand on his shoulder and the smell of smoke that lingers in the air.

He thinks now he understands Eret, the way the king was driven to betray L'Manberg not out of spite, but out of a necessity to survive to the next day. Eret was smarter than them all, and all Tubbo can do is follow in their footsteps.

Tubbo walks forward, because he is a soldier first and a boy second. When

emotions fail, there is logic to take their place. When Tubbo picks a side, he leans fully in, accepts the burden and all of its consequences.

It is not hard to follow Tommy and Wilbur—they leave a clear path. Debris is knocked out of the way, grasses trampled on, and Tubbo even finds a stray piece of Tommy's red and white shirt where it had caught on a branch. It is strange to see them like this, upsetting if Tubbo lets himself feel emotional, pieces of their panic so evident. Tubbo remembers running through these exact woods with Tommy in some elaborate game of tag. It must have not been that long ago, but it feels so long as well, the world so different and raw now in a way it never was when they were young.

There is a hole built in the side of a hill. It is fresh, the dirt recently moved around and replaced to look as if it wasn't, but it just sort of seems haphazard, as if someone was trying to claw their way from the inside out. Tubbo recognizes it instantly, knows like the back of his hand that this was the spot he and Tommy would run to when days got too hard in L'Manberg, when fights went on too long or Wilbur seemed just a little too tipped towards something dangerous.

This is their childhood, except it's not anymore, robbed and stripped from them the way everything else in these lands are. They are not allowed to own anything precious; nothing good stays.

He pushes back the dirt all the same, hating the way it feels just a little like coming home.

The opening in the hill is a small room with a bed and a couple chests lining the walls. It is simple and squished, smaller than Tubbo has ever seen either Tommy or Wilbur build, but that's what war does to people. It strips them down and fits them for survival, moulding them into something useful rather than something pretty. In the corner sits a small hole that descends into a spiral staircase, falling away into the stone below. Tubbo can hear shouting coming from it, Tommy's loud screeches falling quiet under Wilbur's booming voice.

He walks the staircase down without trepidation because these are the two people he trusts more than anything else in this world. It is easy to say yes, but it is hard to mean it each time, and for Tommy and Wilbur, Tubbo would mean it a million times over.

Wilbur stands at the bottom of a ravine, his L'Manberg uniform shucked off, leaving him in a white undershirt. His hair is wild and disheveled, and he's leaning over Tommy, crowding him in a way Tubbo knows Tommy doesn't enjoy.

"Wilbur," he says, watching carefully and Wilbur snaps up and Tommy takes a step back. "I have news."

"Tubbo!" Tommy shouts, sidestepping Wilbur to wrap Tubbo in a hug. Tubbo lets him hold him close, if only just for a moment. "You're okay!"

"Are *you* okay?" Tubbo asks. He'll forever wonder how Tommy can think of others in this moment, when he's just been kicked out of a country he helped create.

"We're fine," Wilbur spits out harshly. "What's the news?"

"Tommy," Tubbo says as Tommy avoids his gaze. He's not sure what answer he's expecting Tommy to give. Maybe he wants to hear that Tommy's not fine, that Tommy's just as broken and ruined as him.

Tommy looks quickly at Wilbur, then at the floor, then at Tubbo. "I'm fine," he says, with all the confidence of someone who is really not.

"What is it?" Wilbur snarks, rounding on Tubbo. It feels familiar, the grated and narrow eyes, the angry frown, the paranoia (always there, forever forefront). He doesn't want to mention the similarities to the newly-elected President. "Spit it out."

"They're hosting a festival," Tubbo says wearily. It feels as if he's aged so much in these past few days, like the world has suddenly come crashing down onto his shoulders from where it used to rest on Wilbur's. He doesn't know when it happened, but he knows that the stars burn patterns into his back that he'll never be able to get rid of, even long after Pogtopia and Manberg are no more than dust.

"They're hosting a festival," Tubbo repeats. "For unity and peace. I'm going to make a speech."

It is the most he has ever been trusted with. Somehow, despite it all, he can't help but feel a little special.

"A festival?" Wilbur asks, turning towards Tommy, who looks caught between wariness and anger. "This is—This is—we could use this."

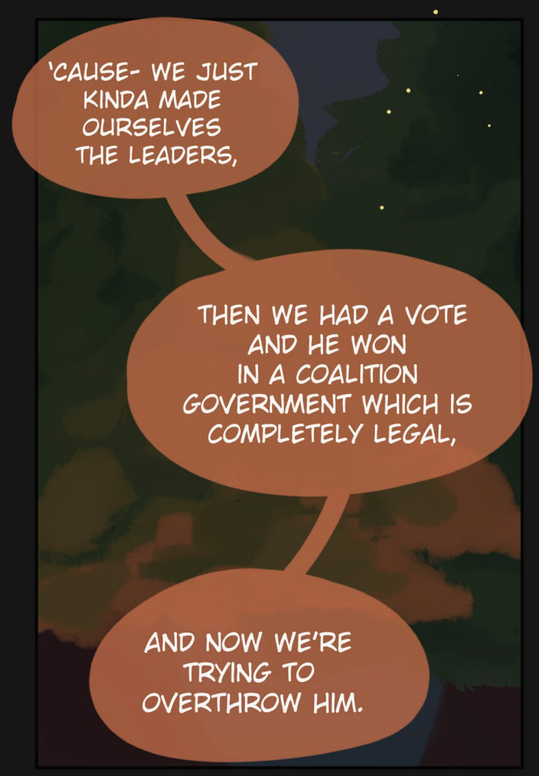
"Will, no—" Tommy extends an arm to grab Wilbur's shoulder but Wilbur just shrugs him right off. He advances towards Tubbo, stalking towards him like a lion on a hunt.

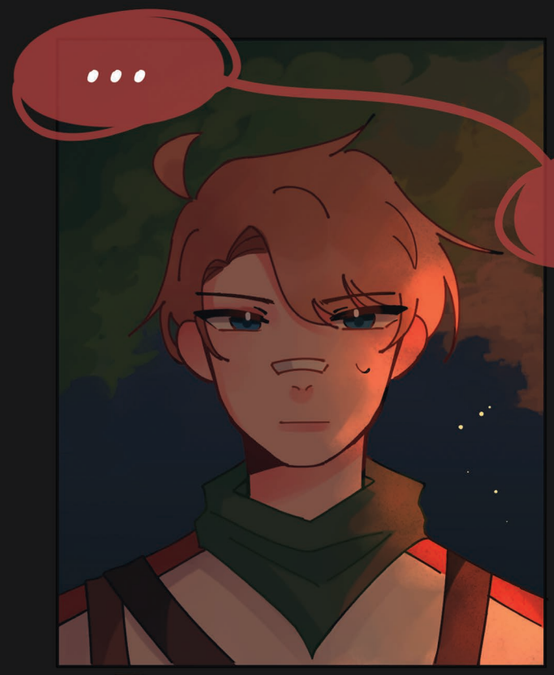
"Stay out of this, Tommy!" Wilbur snaps. He is so unlike the man Tubbo built the burned and rotted walls of L'Manberg with, the man who Tubbo once considered a friend. "If this is what Schlatt wants, this is what he'll get."

"Will, I—" Tommy starts again, trying to sandwich himself between Tubbo and a larger than life Wilbur. It is in these moments that one can see the real Tommy if they know how to look, the Tommy who loves and cares and protects, and Tubbo has always known how to look. If Wilbur notices Tommy's behavior, he doesn't show it; he sidesteps Tommy and brushes right past Tubbo, turning around to face them both.

"Let the festival begin," Wilbur Soot says. Something in his eyes sparks wildly.

THIS SEEMS LIKE A NICE FRIENDLY THING SCHLATT IS DOING

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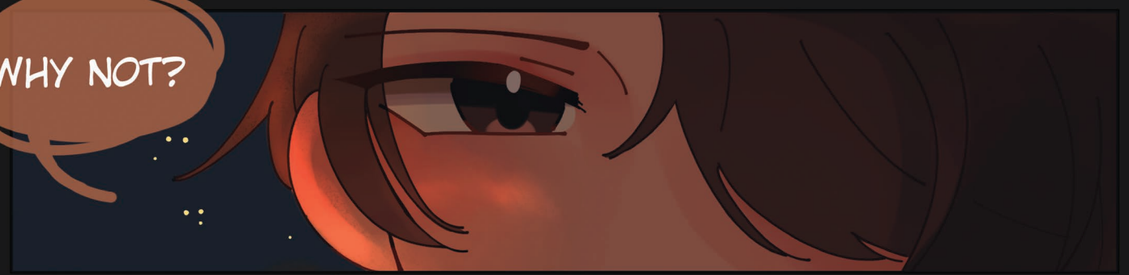
NO.


WHY NOT?

CAUSE WE STARTED L'MANBURG, AND WE SHOULD'VE WON THAT VOTE
BUT THE PEOPLE DECIDED THAT WE SHOULDN'T HAVE.

ME AND YOU, WE BOTH AGREE WE'RE IN THE RIGHT

.. WELL YEAH, I'M ALWAYS IN THE RIGHT.

THEN LET'S BE THE BAD GUYS

TOMMY-
TOMMY, WHY NOT?
LOOK OUR NATIONS GONE! OUR NATION'S FAR BEHIND US TOMMY-
LETS BLOW THAT MOTHERFUCKER TO SMITHEREENS. LETS BLOW THE WHOLE THING UP!
WILBUR ARE YOU THINKING-
TOMMY, IF WE CAN'T HAVE MANBERG,
THEN NO ONE, NO ONE CAN HAVE MANBERG.

TO THE READER,

A lot has changed since the first season of the DSMP; both within the server and without. I'm confident that everyone managed to capture the nostalgic essence of that first season. Thank you for reading. -Lucy

I have watched this project and community grow and pride does not even begin to describe how I feel. I sincerely hope you enjoyed! Thank you, dear reader, for supporting our artists. Without you, we would be nothing. -0.00009

Passion and dedication brings a person far, but when a team does it, the result is insurmountable. -Riken

I saw the sunrise on the first day of the DSMP, and watched the painting of its final dusk. Everyone has poured their heart and soul into this project, and the product is breathtaking, so please enjoy, dear reader. -Ake

Seeing so many people come together and give their most to this project has been an incredible experience, and I am beyond proud of what we have made. Thank you for supporting us - we wouldn't have been able to do it without you. -Kiwi

I knew nothing about DSMP coming into this project but I've found an incredible story brought to life by an amazing community of people. It's been an honor working with everyone, and I hope that you, the reader, enjoy seeing all the talent contained in these pages as much as I enjoyed reconstructing the story into a whole. -kroalias

This project has been a real dream for me, when I first came up with the idea of a graphic novel for the DSMP that was all it was, an idea. I thought this project up around the beginning of December 2020, the idea was rough and not too well shaped to be honest-- I couldn't have done anything without the moderation team who has been nothing but awesome throughout this whole project, thank you all so much for all the hard work you guys have done throughout the past 7-9 months. The "real" work started in March 2021, the mod team was complete and the contributors were in, everyone was so enthusiastic and we had a lot of support along the way. This road for sure has been filled with ups and downs but still we managed to see it through. I couldn't be happier with what we all have produced, all the skill and work put into this and the atmosphere the whole team had created was just beyond anything I could have imagined in the beginning.
Thank you, for believing and sticking with me, with us, until the end. :) -Eriyato

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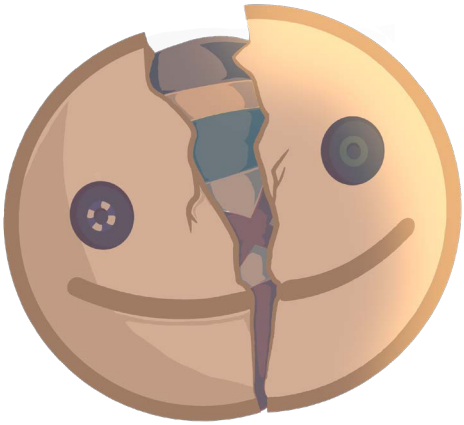

"MY UNFINISHED SYMPHONY...
FOREVER UNFINISHED"

@DSMP.FANZINE